Lost in translation, lost in migration, lost in education – a study of the academic and social integration of first generation children of migrants in an Irish second level school.

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Authors Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis which I now submit as part of the programme of study leading to the award of Doctorate in Education (EdD) is entirely my own work. I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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ID No. 58118179

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List of Acronyms

ASTI   Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland

AO   Attendance Officer

CSO   Central Statistics Office

DES   Department of Education and Skills

DEIS   Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

DETE   Department of Enterprise, Trade and Environment

EAL   English as Additional Language

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

ELSP   English Language Proficiency

ELSTA   English Language Support Teachers Association

ESRI   Economic and Social Research Institute

EU   European Union

FRA   European Agency for Fundamental Rights

HSCL   Home School Community Liaison Officer

IA   Intercultural Ambassador

ICI   Immigrant Council of Ireland

IES   Intercultural Education Strategy

IO   Integration Officer

NEWB   National Educational Welfare Board

NCCRI   National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

NGO   Non Government Organisation

NPAR   National Action Plan Against Racism

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PA   Policy Advisor

SCP   School Completion Programme

SNA   Special Needs Assistant

TUI   Teachers Union of Ireland

TY   Transition Year

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Chapter One
Context of Study

1.0 Introduction

The doctoral study consists of an investigation into the educational experiences of children of migrants in the Irish second level system. The author has centred the study on the academic and social integration of first generation children of migrants, also referred to in this study as immigrant and newcomer students. The research was carried out in a large post primary school in a provincial Irish town where the researcher works. This chapter will contain four separate but interrelated sections. The first section will focus primarily on describing the dramatic growth in immigration into Ireland from circa 1993 and its continuation up to the present.   Drawing on data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) the author will present a statistical profile of the trajectory of Ireland's immigration patterns during the economic boom years from 1993 to 2007 and up to 2011 when the most recent census was conducted.

The second section will focus specifically on first generation children of migrants enrolled in the Irish second level system. In order to compile a picture of the enrolment of children of migrants, a body of statistics will be presented based on the 2006 and 2011 Census figures, CSO data and Department of Education and Skills (DES) data.

The third section will contain three elements, the first of which consists of an elucidation of the purpose and rationale for the study and the researcher's position as an inside researcher. The building of the theoretical framework will be explained. The research questions that will drive the study will be introduced in this section along with a depiction of the setting where the fieldwork will be carried out.

The fourth section will comprise of three main parts – an outline of the EU policy response, followed by Irish Government response to the increase in cultural and linguistic diversity in Irish schools. The chapter will end with a discussion on changes to policy and to additional educational supports for children of migrants since the 2008 economic collapse. The chapter ends with the conclusions section.

1.1 Immigration from 1993 onwards

During the economic boom of the so called Celtic Tiger years, from circa 1993 to 2007, the Irish economy grew at the rate of 4-5% per year, generating unprecedented levels of employment opportunities in Ireland, resulting in the country becoming one of immigration rather than emigration, during that particular period.

By European standards Ireland's experience of immigration – immigrants became more than 10 per cent of the population in less than a decade – is unusual but so too, the academic literature on the 'Celtic Tiger' phenomena has argued, was Ireland's trajectory of economic development (Fanning 2011, p3).

Between 1995 and 2000, GDP per capita grew two to three times faster than the average for the OECD and the EU (Taguma et al. 2009).

In the 1990's Irelands economic performance improved and the numbers and composition of the immigrant population began to change dramatically from around 2000 (Taguma et al. 2009, p15).

The rapid economic growth was fuelled by a combination of multinational investment particularly in the information technology (IT) and pharmaceutical sectors and by a boom in the construction industry. Brisk growth resulted in skills deficits in some areas and in order to meet the needs of the economy, the Irish government recruited from abroad. By the end of the year 2000, the figure for work permit holders had risen to 18,017, and by the end of 2001 the figure was 36,436. The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) issued 40,321 work permits in 2002, while 47,551 work permits were issued in 2003 (DETE 2003).

In 2001, the majority of the 36,436 permits were issued to individuals from Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Philippines, South Africa and Romania. The recruitment of foreign employees, took place through work fairs abroad and through advertising (Loyal 2003).

The EU integration process has put the free movement of workers at the heart of its economic dynamic (Favell and Hansen 2002, p.3). The free movement of workers constitutes a fundamental principle of the European Union, as stated in Article 39 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (Kahanec and Zimmermann 2008). EU directives such as that of 2004/38/EC on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States (OJ No L 158, 30.04.2004)

combined with EU enlargement in 2004 contributed to the rise in the numbers of migrants from EU states. Eight Eastern European states, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia plus the Mediterranean islands of Malta and Cyprus joined the EU in May 2004. The pre-enlargement older member states opted for a transitional period of up to seven years before allowing full access to their labour markets but Ireland (along with the UK and Sweden), allowed unrestricted movement and access for people from the new EU-10 accession states. As a consequence Ireland received an increase in immigration from the EU-10 states with Poland becoming the main country of origin of migrant workers.

Accession Treaty OJ L 157 of 25.4.2005 resulted in Bulgaria and Romania (EU-2) joining the EU in January 2007. The Treaties that govern EU-2 accession provide for a 7-year transition period before their nationals have full access to the labour markets of Member States. Ireland imposed restrictions, for EU-2 citizens, on access to its labour market and these restrictions are in place until the end of 2013.

Between the census of 2002 and 2006, the numbers of foreign nationals normally resident in Ireland increased from 224,000 to 420,000 (a rise of 87%), so that foreign nationals represented some 10% of Ireland's population. Of all those overseas nationals enumerated in Census 2006, 75% were EU nationals.

Kahanec and Zimmermann (2008, p.13) conjectured that the East-West post enlargement flow of migrants was a result of dissatisfaction with economic opportunities in the new member states and attracted by better labour market opportunities in the old member states such as the UK, Sweden and Ireland. Polish nationals represented the highest proportion of migrants into Ireland, from the 2004 accession states. Grabowska (2005, cited in Nestor and Regan 2011, p.50) described the "dual character" of in-migration from Poland as economically motivated in nature, firstly through multinational and Irish company bosses and secondly through chain migration, which is a process resulting from the development of a network of migrants through personal contacts. As economic growth and labour shortages contributed to the rise in the numbers of migrants into the country an increase in numbers of asylum seekers also occurred during the economic boom period. In 1992, Ireland received only 39 applications for asylum, while four years later in 1996, this figure had risen to 1,179. Applications for asylum increased to 7,724 in 1999 and to 10,325 in 2001 (Loyal 2003).

Before April 2000 asylum seekers could receive full Supplementary Welfare Assistance payments and rent supplementation if they secured private rented accommodation. Asylum seekers who arrived after April 2000 were provided for through a system of dispersal and direct provision. Prior to 2003, asylum seekers who had a child born in Ireland could then apply for residency. In January of that year, the Supreme Court ruled that non-EU immigrants did not have an automatic right to residency solely because they were parents of a young Irish citizen. A constitutional amendment in 2004 redefined Irish citizenship and the rules surrounding it. The number of asylum applications dropped dramatically as a result.

In 2009, 2,689 applications for asylum were received representing a 30 per cent decrease from the 2008 total of 3,866 applications which in turn represented a 3 per cent decrease on the corresponding figure of 3,985 in 2007. At the time of writing, applications are down from a peak of 11,634 in 2002 to 1,250 in 2011 (DES 2011).

The diversity of the immigrant population was reflected in the wide range of national, social, cultural linguistic and ethnic backgrounds (Darmody, Tyrell and Song 2010) which resulted in over a hundred different languages being spoken in the country (Darmody and McCoy 2011).

Devine (2011, p.153) opines that "the intensity of immigration" that led to demographic change during the so called Celtic Tiger years, from circa 1993 to 2007, was "unprecedented" and "new." By 2007, immigrants comprised about 11% of the Irish population (Taguma et al. 2009). The population breakdown figures compiled from the Census 2011 have been released by the CSO and reveal that inward migration is still a notable characteristic of modern Ireland. The data demonstrates that the number of Irish residents who were born outside Ireland continues to increase and stood at 766,770 in 2011, an increase of 25% on 2006. From 2006-2011 the number of non-Irish nationals increased by 124,604 and by 2011 non-Irish nationals comprised 12% of the total population. Almost all migrant groups in Ireland recorded an increase in numbers between 2006 and 2011. The largest numerical increases were among EU-12 national groups: Polish, Lithuanians, and Romanians. There were also large percentage increases among Hungarian nationals while Indian and Brazilian national groups doubled in size between 2006 and 2011.

The unique aspect of migration into Ireland, as outlined, is distinctive in that, in comparison with other Western recipient countries, immigration occurred at a very fast rate and this led to rapid demographic changes which became clearly evident in many Irish classrooms.

Census 2011 reveals that for the first time in the history of the state, the largest migrant group in the country is not from the UK. The Polish have now taken that position, with a 94 % increase in their number living in Ireland since 2006. In April 2011, there were just over 122,000 Poles recorded by the Census. The second largest migrant group in the country are people from the UK, at around 112,000, unchanged in number since the previous Census of 2006.

According to Census 2011, the overall percentage of people living in Ireland with a nationality other than Irish is 12%, compared to just over 10% in 2006. The overall numbers have grown from around 420,000 in 2006 to just over 540,000 in 2011, representing an increase of 30%. The influx of migrants from the EU states and from countries all over the world inevitably led to a dramatic increase in diversity in schools throughout Ireland. The next section will focus on the diversity in the composition of the student population that emerged as the children of migrants entered the Irish education system.

1.2 Children of Migrants in Education

Schools are often at the coal face of change, experiencing social shifts directly through the changing characteristics and needs of the child population (Devine 2011, p.153).

Census 2006 data estimated that children of migrants constituted approximately 10% of the primary school population and 6% of the secondary school student population (Smyth et al. 2009, p.xiv). A breakdown of the 2006 figures indicated that 10% of children from different cultural backgrounds were in the10-14 age group, and 9% were in the 15-19 age group. CSO figures showed that 7.5% of PPS numbers issued to immigrants in 2005 were to the 0-14 age cohort. Over 2006, 2007 and 2008, the figure increased to 17.5%, showing that the proportion of younger immigrants within migrant communities is increasing (CSO, 2009).

Higher numbers of immigrant students were enrolled in post-primary schools in 2008/09 than in the previous year. In addition, the birth rate for 2008 was the highest since 1896. Over 15% of these children were born to mothers from countries other than the UK or Ireland (OECD 2009, p.28).

An audit of enrolment policies published by the Department of Education and Science (DES), November 2008, covered 1,572 secondary schools. The audit revealed that immigrant children are mostly accommodated in local vocational and community schools, demonstrating the disparities that exist between schools in terms of enrolment. In one Dublin vocational school, 26% of students were described as 'newcomers' or the children of immigrants, compared with 0.1% in the school next door. According to the Irish Vocational and Education Committee (IVEA),

> …it is generally acknowledged that VEC schools have enrolled significantly more than their 'fair share' of students whose first language is other than English. (IVEA 2008, p.23)

Due to the economic collapse of 2008 and the resultant recession, there is, as yet, no firm evidence, that migrants with children in schools are leaving the country in any significant numbers. The CSO of 2009 and 2011 figures indicate that they are not. It is therefore not surprising that the numbers of students declaring their nationality as other than Irish, at post-primary level, increased in the school year 2008/09 when compared to 2007/08.

The CSO published information which shows that to April 2009 the numbers of new migrants are still very significant (CSO 2009). The report also shows, however, that minimal numbers (1,200) of those aged under 15 are emigrating (CSO 2009). In other words, families with children in school do not appear to be leaving in significant numbers. This is an important finding in relation to the education of children of migrants. Furthermore, while all the indications are that inward migration has slowed, there was still an inward flow of 57,300 in the year to April 2009 which is at about 2004 levels and still significant (CSO 2009).

In 2009, 8% of the post- primary population were children of migrants with over 160 nationalities represented, the largest numbers originating from the United Kingdom, Poland, Nigeria, Lithuania and the USA (John Curran, Minister of State for Integration 2009).

Since 2008 immigration has fallen (CSO 2011). While the number of immigrants declined, the numbers who continue to work and reside here remains relatively high especially among those with school aged children OECD (2009 cited in Devine 2011).

In the 2010/11 academic year, numbers rose to 32,013 (based on self- declared nationalities) in mainstream post- primary education. This represented 10% of the total student cohort at

this level, and is an increase from the previous year's figure of 28,422, which was 9% of the student population (DES 2011).

The indications are clear that children from a wide variety of backgrounds and culture are part of the Irish education system and will remain so in the future. In the next section the author will discuss the rationale for undertaking the study of newcomer students as they negotiate the Irish second-level education system.

1.3 Purpose and Rationale

Immigrant students navigate both the academic and the social terrain, on a daily basis in the school community. The researcher deliberated over this aspect of their school experience and wanted to find out how newcomer students could be supported in their academic progress and social integration in Irish second level schools.

As outlined in 1.1, the growth of non- English speakers immigration into Ireland was "unprecedented and unanticipated" (IVEA 2008), and "revolutionary" (Kearney 2008). The demographic shift which emerged at national level, particularly from 1993 onwards, impacted noticeably on enrolments in Irish schools. Irish classrooms have become more diversified and immigrant children are now reflected in the composition of the student body at both primary and second level (Smyth et al. Research Bulletin 2009/2/6). The urban school selected for this study experienced a growth in diversity and the author of this study, who also worked in the school, noted the challenges presented by the growth in numbers from a multiplicity of backgrounds, language and culture. As outlined in 1.1 the dramatic increase in migration into Ireland from circa 1993 onwards was due to the recruitment of labour from abroad in order to meet the skills deficit in the booming economy and the government's decision to allow free labour access to the EU-10 access countries.

Government response to the growth of non-English speaking children entering Irish schools was non-existent up to 1999 when English language support teachers were introduced (1.4). The author conjectured that the English Language support provision was failing to meet the needs of the children of migrants entering second level with little or no English and speculated the academic and social progress of immigrant students would be hindered by the insufficient support. Even when English language support was at its optimum in 2007, studies such as Lyons and Little (2009) showed that the support fell short of the immigrant student needs.

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In the investigation of the broad area of supports, the researcher wanted to find out the level of school management and school staff support for children of migrants and what supports were available for their parents. The researcher's interest in their academic achievement stemmed from a concern that a performance gap was developing between newcomers and their peers. He wondered if enough attention was paid to the psychological impact of migration on children and to what extent the emotional and social adjustments to a new country impacted on learning. His desire to find out the particular needs of this group of students and how they were supported, prompted the study.

An emergent sense of a notable link between the integration of children of migrants and scholastic achievement led to an exploration of the relationship between the academic and social integration of the migrant student and attainment of educational potential. Researchers working in the field of academic potential recognise that attempts to define 'potential' are immensely complex and therefore identifying underachievement or failure to reach potential is similarly problematic (Gillies 2008). It is the position of the author of this study that conceptual problems exist with the notions of 'potential,' 'attainment' and 'underachievement.'

By examining the social integration alongside academic integration a narrow focus on academic attainment based solely on exam results is avoided and a consideration of the impact of social and cultural factors on the immigrant students' academic achievement, is taken into account.

The purpose of the study is to explore the level of support for children of migrants at second level and to what degree the existing supports and interventions assist the academic and social integration of the student. As part of this study, the author set out to investigate to what extent the experience of migration, relocation, adjustment to a new country and an unfamiliar school environment effects the emotional and social aspects of the immigrant student as he believes that the social and emotional adjustment of immigrant children is connected with their academic achievement. An examination of friendship patterns and participation in school sports and cultural events is part of the study of social integration. Taking inspiration from Lasso and Soto's (2005) study of relationships between migrants and indigenous students the author set out to examine the effects of interpersonal peer relationships on the social integration and the academic progress of the student.

In this case study the author wished to explore if discontinuities between school and home exist, identify possible causes and ascertain to what extent these impact on educational achievement. Parents/guardians who do not master the language of the school can hardly support their children in doing homework and may not develop a strategic knowledge of the education system. As the research is carried out from 2009 to 2012, in a shifting social, economic and educational landscape, the consequences of the reduction in the numbers of language support teachers, middle management positions and cutbacks to financial and staff allocation, maintaining the focus on supports for children of migrants remains an important focus.

In order to carry out a case study the author used a mixed method approach of questionnaires to teachers, one to one interviews with management and internal support personnel, interviews with external personnel, student focus group discussions and document/database analysis. In the study he set out to examine the reality of school life of the migrant young person through a variety of perspectives but most importantly to hear the voice of the young immigrant student as they navigate all the dimensions of life in a second level school. He aimed to tap into a unique font of knowledge which the students and those who worked closely with them could provide. The case study methodology was chosen with the goal of reaching a deep layer of understanding of how the newcomer child navigates the second level system.

1.3.1 The researcher's personal and professional position

The investigation of the research question on how schools can support newcomer students in their academic and social integration at second level was undertaken for a number of personal and professional reasons. The author's on-going interest in social justice, global and development issues inspired his selection of Geography as one of his undergraduate degree subjects. As an educator for the last 36 years he has taught in the voluntary secondary, vocational and community school second level system. The first three years of his education career were in West Africa, teaching English and Geography at second level. The experience of working and travelling in Africa led to the development of awareness of social justice issues and global power dynamics which awakened an interest in the legacy of colonialism and how post-colonial hegemonies such as multinationals and powerful trading alliances contributed towards worldwide inequality and the perpetuation of disadvantage at global level.

While studying for a diploma in Guidance and Counselling, he became interested in the area of access and equity in education. As a result he decided to explore the barriers encountered by some students at second level. He chose the topic of early school leaving for his Masters degree at Trinity College Dublin (TCD). In the course of the masters study he was introduced to the theory of Bourdieu on the reproduction of inequality. On completion of the Masters his interest in disadvantage as it relates to curriculum development motivated him to establish the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) in the second level school where he worked. As a guidance counsellor he became aware of a range of challenges encountered by migrant students and wondered if state and school support was enough to meet their linguistic and socio-cultural needs. He wondered if state and school provision was effective in supporting the academic progress of second and additional language learners. The questions he pondered were related to the link between English language provision/acquisition and exam performance. He questioned the efficacy of the provision in ensuring that an achievement gap would not open up between children of migrants and their Irish peers. He wondered if schools provided sufficient support to meet the additional social and emotional needs of immigrant children as they negotiated the education system.

The fieldwork for this doctoral study was carried out in the school where the author works positioning him as an insider researcher. There are advantages and disadvantages to the position of insider researcher. Familiarity with the organisation (Hannabus 2000) can speed up the research process and enable deeper excavation of the data (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 2006). As a guidance counsellor and teacher in the school selected for the study, he was aware that, prior to the research, he carried his own perspectives on issues and needed to guard against his own preconceptions (Robson 2002) and apply caution and reflexivity (Hodkinson 2005). The researcher's position, in relation to access, intrusiveness, familiarity and rapport with the research subjects and the workplace (Mercer 2007, Hannabus 2000), is examined further in 3.12.

He selected a range of methods for data collection – teacher questionnaires, one to one interviews with management and support personnel, student focus group discussion and document/database analysis. The procurement of data from multiple sources - newcomer students, school database, documents, teachers, school management and support staff was a considered choice on his part, in order to guard against the imposition of his own views as well as ensuring triangulation.

As a guidance counsellor in a large school, he did not have regular contact with the majority of focus group participants. The focus group participants were selected from both third year and sixth year groups. He was not in charge of any personal counselling for third years and prior to the research did not know any of the third year student focus group participants. In that sense he was similar to an outside researcher. In the case of sixth years, he engaged with two of the participants in a weekly classroom guidance class. He wished to carry out his research in such a way that the advantages of being an insider such as an understanding of the routines and the scripts of the workplaces (Hannabus 2000), would not compromise his role as an impartial researcher. The "pros and cons of insiderness" Mercer (2007, p.8) are discussed in deeper detail in 3.12.

Prior to the data collection, the researcher's reflections, observations, aspirations and questions were marshalled into a theoretical framework which will be discussed in the next section.

1.3.2 Theoretical Framework

The central contention of this study that there is a direct relationship between the academic and social integration of newcomer students in their school and their academic performance and that schools have a critical role to play in creating the conditions and supports that facilitate the academic and social integration of newcomer students.

The researcher concentrated on first generation children of migrants. The theoretical framework which underpins this study asserts that academic and social integration of the newcomer students is critical to the attainment of their educational potential. The author is mindful of the conceptual problems with the notion of 'potential' and the difficulties with endeavours to define 'educational potential.' For the purpose of this study the author adopts the term as embodying the whole person and the full breadth of their educational experience from a holistic perspective, including academic, social and personal development.

An emergent sense (an assumption on the part of the author) of a notable link between the social integration of children of migrants and scholastic achievement led to a desire to examine the relationship between the academic and social integration of the migrant student and attainment of educational potential. It is the position of the author of this study that conceptual problems exist with the notions of 'potential,' 'attainment' and 'underachievement.' Researchers working in the field of academic potential recognise that

attempts to define 'potential' are immensely complex and therefore identifying underachievement or failure to reach potential, is similarly problematic. Academic integration in this study is conceived as the extent to which students are connected to, or engaged in what is classroom learning and student engagement influences academic performance (Steinberg, Brown and Dornbursch 1996).

The author endeavours to extend the focus on academic attainment to include an examination of social and cultural factors on the immigrant students' educational experience. When students are absorbed and intellectually involved in what they are learning, a degree of connectedness develops between the student, teacher, peers and other personnel (Suárez-Orozco 2008). The conceptual framework for the study rests on the premise that the social components of integration, as in the development of relationships with key personnel, are as important as cognitive engagement. The level of engagement with the learning in the classroom influences academic performance and develops connectedness with others.

Academic attainment and social connectedness at school level are influenced by proficiency in the language of instruction and by socio-cultural and socio-economic factors outside the classroom and the school. Therefore the academic and social aspects of integration are inextricably linked.

Regarding language proficiency, the author observed the difficulties which newcomer students have with basic communication skills in their daily interpersonal interactions with peers and with teachers. The construct of language proficiency incorporates the concept of inclusion and is relevant to both learning and friendship formation (Fanning et al., 2011, Lodge and Lynch 2004). Proficiency in the language of instruction, is located at the nexus of academic achievement and social engagement. For immigrant students in Irish classrooms, low levels of proficiency place the newcomer in a disadvantaged position in the classroom which results in learning outcomes which are below his/her cognitive ability (Smyth et al. 2009). Academic failure of language minority students due to shortcomings of language support in Canadian schools is postulated by Cummins (1979). Lyons and Little (2009), found that the implementation of English language support in Irish secondary schools was poorly coordinated due to inadequate in-service and poor communication between EAL and subject teachers. DES language support policy seemed to ignore the international research which distinguishes between the fundamental interpersonal communication skills required for

social interaction and the cognitive language processing skills required for academic progress. Smyth et al. (2009) indicated that the lack of language competency impacted adversely on academic attainment and that children of migrants were socialising among themselves and reported being bullied on the grounds of nationality or ethnicity. The development of friendships along ethnic lines was evident in schools at break times (Devine 2011) and resulted in clustering, an occurrence which underlines the development of dissociation between children of migrants and indigenous Irish peers.

The building of social capital in the form of relationships with teachers and the formation of positive social relationships with peers is compromised by poor levels of proficiency in English which in turn inhibits the migrant child's ability to internalise the social and cultural norms of their new environment (Devine 2011). The disadvantaged position results in power differentials between newcomers and peers which according to recent research (Molcho, Kelly and Nic Gabhainn 2011; Curry et al. 2011) can leave the minority language students vulnerable to bullying.

Language proficiency is connected with the concept of social and cultural capital as espoused by Bourdieu (1986) who argued that upper class/middle class students inherit a built-in advantage because they have been socialised in the dominant culture. The knowledge and skills, styles of interaction, values and dispositions in the habitus of a person, make up their cultural capital and the cultural capital of migrant families can be lost as they become minorities in their new country. Research shows that immigrant students' bilingual linguistic abilities are not valued as cultural capital (Fionda 2009) and as configurations of power and position are played out in the school setting, children of migrants are disadvantaged. Furthermore, the sorting function of school further differentiates people (Bourdieu 1998).

Bourdieu's theory on the reproduction of the dominant culture by the education system is discussed further in 2.4.1 with Gramsci's (1971)theory of cultural hegemony.

Findings from a number of studies have indicated that active parental involvement in education is beneficial to the child from a behavioural and an academic point of view (O'Connor 2000, Nowlan 2008, Includ-Ed, 2009). Relations between schools, teachers and parents of migrant children tend to be weak or non-existent (Heckmann 2008). Cultural differences, the lack of knowledge of the language, education systems and resources of the host country are likely to create a barrier for parents and children alike when accessing the

education system (OECD 2009). Schofield (2006) contends that feelings of cultural estrangement, alienation and powerlessness which are common among immigrant parents stymies the school and home relationship. This weak home/school relationship adds to the parents' sense of marginality. From this marginal position the immigrant parent is confirmed in their status as an 'outsider' (Mitchell, 2008) and often has less knowledge than others of the 'invisible codes of power' (Carreon, Drake and Barton, 2005), which are embedded and pervasive in the school culture and structures.

The belief that schools need to pro-actively support newcomer students to navigate both the educational and the social/emotional terrain in a manner that enables the young person to become academically and socially integrated into the school community thus increasing the potential for academic success and social integration led to the formulation of the research question. Academic and social integration is conceptualised as comprising a range of components for investigation:

- English language proficiency and academic participation
- Parental engagement with school
- Friendship/peer relationships
- Involvement with extra-curricular activities
- Relationships with teaching staff
- Attendance patterns

The aforementioned elements of academic and social integration guide the formulation of the research questions. The guiding principle for the research in this inquiry is a combination of the central research question, the sub questions and the theoretical framework. The research question is formulated from the theoretical framework, the personal observations and experiences and refined by the key messages from the literature review. So this will be reflected in the analysis in a reflexive, inductive, deductive fashion.

The research questions as outlined pivot around the central issue of the necessity for newcomer students to experience academic and social integration in the school and the responsibility of school management, teachers and support staff to foster academic and social integration through effective supports. The formulation of the research questions are underpinned by the researcher's experience working in the school selected for this study and

from the cogent themes emerging from the relevant literature. Therefore the research question and its sub questions were framed to focus on the fundamental issues relating the needs of newcomers and the necessity for academic and social supports. The overarching research question is: How can newcomer students be supported in their academic and social integration in Irish second level schools?

The main research question can be sectioned into particular areas which require investigation. The sub questions are:

- How does the school leadership support the academic and social integration of newcomer students?
- How do teachers perceive the academic and social integration of newcomer students?
- How do Irish students contribute to the social and academic integration of newcomer students?
- In what ways does the school support the parents of newcomer students in the school?
- Are there barriers to academic and social integration of newcomer students in the school?
- Where should the school concentrate its efforts to support social and academic integration of newcomer students in the school?

The study is driven by the research questions and the methodology is chosen on the basis that it offers the best prospects for answering the research question and its sub questions. In the next section the author will outline the migration background of the newcomer students in the post primary school selected for this study.

1.3.3 Setting
The setting for this study is a large post primary school in a provincial town, with a student population over 1500. Established in the early nineties, as the result of the amalgamation of two voluntary secondary and a vocational school, it is non-denominational and offers a wide range of both academic and vocational subjects. Children from the Traveller Community, a small number of exchange students from France or Spain on short stays, and students from the main Christian religions attended the school since its establishment.

Children of migrants began enrolling from circa 1998 mainly originating in Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Their parents had immigrated on work permits, or came to Ireland in order

to join family members who had set up business in the locality or were recruited to work in the services, hotel, catering and food industry. As the local economy expanded during the boom years, workers were recruited mainly from Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Slovakia)) and from the Balkan states (Romania, Croatia, Slovenia) for the local agri food and meat processing industries.   From 2004 (EU 10 Accession) the numbers of children and adolescents from the EU10 states increased. The highest numbers were from Poland. Up to 2011, the school in this study was the only second-level school in the area and therefore received all the children of migrants of post primary age who lived in the catchment area. The following tables 1.1 to 1.3 show the numbers of newcomer children in each year group from 2009-2012. and Fig 1.4 demonstrates the percentages of newcomer children in each year group from 2009-2012.

1st year	2nd year	3rd year	Trans year	5th year	6th year	Total
19	17	11	1	22	13	83

Table 1.1 Number of newcomer students 2009/10

1st year	2nd year	3rd year	Trans year	5th year	6th year	Total
25	19	19	1	14	18	96

Table 1.2 Number of newcomer students 2010/11

1st year	2nd year	3rd year	Trans year	5th year	6th year	Total
14	22	19	3	20	14	92

Table 1.3 Number of newcomer students 2011/12

The percentage population of newcomer students in the school showed an increase of approximately 1% over the three years of the study 2009-2012 (Fig.1.4).

Year	Total	%
2009-2010	83	5.5
2010-2011	96	6.4
2011-2012	92	6.1

Table 1.4 Percentages of newcomers in the school

As pointed out earlier in this section, newcomer students came from wide-ranging backgrounds. Fig. 1.5 (below) gives an overview of the array of nationalities attending the school throughout the duration of the field study.

Albanian,	Croatian	Latvian	Nigerian	Portuguese	Syrian
Algerian	Estonian	Lithuanian	Pakistani	Romanian	Thailand
Bangladeshi	German	Malaysian	Philipino	Yugoslavian	Turkish
Brazilian	Greek	Moldavian	Polish	Senegalese	Ukrainian
				Seychelles	

Table 1.5 Nationalities represented in the school 2009-2012

In order to outline the distribution of different nationalities throughout each year group, Data was collated for one academic year 2011/12. Figures 1.5- 1.10 show the different nationalities in each year group from 1st to 6th year for the school year 2011/12.

Estonian	German	Latvian	Lithuanian	Pakistani	Philipino	Polish	Portuguese	Senegalese	Turkish
2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1

Table 1.1 Distribution of nationalities 1st Year 2011/2012

Algeria	Croatia	Greece	India	Latvian	Lithuanian	Pakistan	Philippines	Polish	Syrian
1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	11	1

Fig 1.7 Distribution of nationalities in 2nd year for 2011//2012

Albanian	Algerian	Bangladeshi	German	Latvian	Nigerian
1	1	1	1	1	1
Philippines	Portuguese	Polish	Romanian	Seychelles	Thailand
1	1	8	1	1	1

Fig 1.8 Distribution of nationalities in 3rd year for 2011/12

Lithuanian	Malaysian	Polish
1	1	1

Fig 1.9 Distribution of nationalities in Transition Year.(2011/2012)

German	Latvian	Lithuanian	Pakistani	Polish	Yugoslavian
1	4	1	1	12	1

Fig 1.10 Distribution of nationalities in 5th year 2011//2012

Brazilian	Czech	Estonian	German	Latvian	Lithuanian	Portuguese	Polish	Syrian
1	1	1	1	2	2	1	4	1

Fig 1.11 Distribution of nationalities in 6th year for 2011//2012

The school availed of DES provision for English as Additional Language (EAL) learners from 1999 onwards (see 1.4.1). From 2007 to 2009, the supports exclusively in place for newcomer students were based on numbers and their needs at the time as outlined in Circular 53/07 (as outlined in 1.4.1, no.6) and on the School Principal's decision to provide additional support.

The supports exclusively in place for children of migrants in the school in 2009 were:

- a team of four (EAL) teachers
- An Integration Officer (IO) middle management post holder
- Children of migrants came within the target group of the School Completion Programme (SCP) which provides support to *all* students and families who are experiencing difficulties in education and *all* students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

As the school is not part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) strategy, initiated in 2006, SCP was granted because of the large numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The programme addresses the educational needs of young people from disadvantaged communities, premised on the belief that:

- Every child and young person deserves an equal chance to access, participate in and benefit from education.
- Each person should have the opportunity to reach her/his full educational potential for personal, social and economic reasons
- Education is a critical factor in promoting social inclusion and economic development (DES 2006 p.15).

SCP supports in the school are breakfast, lunchtime and homework clubs and assistance the transition to secondary school programme as well as responding to individual needs. As two of the interviewees for this study are SCP coordinators, the management, the supports and initiatives of the programme are explained in greater detail in 3.10.1.

The school Principal, deputy-principal, year heads, class tutors are available as supports for all students, including newcomers as is the Guidance and Counselling service and the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme. Being a non-DEIS school, official hours were not designated for Home, School and Community Liaison (HSCL). Communication with parents was carried out by the IO and SCP. At the time of writing all of these areas have been adversely affected by government financial and allocation cuts and the IO position no longer exists.

Supports for newcomer students at school level are determined by government human and financial investment and government policy. The European Union response to migration and cultural diversity and the concept of integration at school and society level will be dealt with in the next section.

1.4 The concept of integration in European Union (EU) policy

Some of the widely used terms on the subject of migrant groups settling in their country of destination, are: absorption, adaptation, race relations cycle, assimilation, acculturation, inclusion, incorporation and, of course, 'integration.' The meaning and context of the term 'integration' will be discussed in this section, being cognisant of the heterogeneity of migrants in terms of nationality, ethnicity, legal status and language skills. The terms 'assimilation', 'multiculturalism' and 'interculturalism' are used in this discussion and will be examined further in the literature review 2.1 and 2.2.

The term 'integration' is widely used in discourse on migration and there are many different views as to what constitutes integration. The concept of integration can vary from the assumption that immigrants will adapt without any expectation of change from the state or majority communities (in effect assimilation) or it can be perceived as an intercultural process where state, majority and minority ethnic communities work together to address diversity issues (NCCRI 2008). Integration is understood as the process of inclusion of immigrants in the institutions and relationships of the host society (Heckmann 2008). The development of positive relations between communities can be achieved by cohesion and integration programmes which adopt the underlying philosophy of interculturalism (ICoCo 2008). The concept of interculturalism is discussed in a comprehensive manner in 2.1

Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) refer to "degree of interconnectedness" and "quality of relations" and assert that integration takes place at three levels- local, national and at

European Union level. The integration of immigrants appeared on the European political agenda with The Council of the EU's 2004 declaration on principles of an integration policy. The salient points included in the report are:

- Successful integration is part of the management of migration
- Integration is intergenerational
- Integration occurs in all facets of life taking place simultaneously at the individual, family, general community and state levels.
- The primary responsibility for the development and implementation of integration policy is with individual Member States rather than with the EU as a whole.

In other EU publications, recommendations regarding successful integration include the fostering of communication with immigrant families and heritage language teaching for children of migrants (European Commission (EC) 2004, EC Green Paper 2008, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) 2009).

1.4.1 Integration and Irish Government Policy Response

As the numbers of newcomer students enrolling in schools continued to increase from 1993 onwards, the Irish government responded with directives, contained in the following circulars and initiatives, implemented by the Department of Education and Science (DES) as well as intercultural guidelines and policy documents.

In 1996, Circular 12/96 was formulated by DES for "pupils from abroad, who have no understanding of English when enrolled," would be required to study one language only, Irish or English. This directive also applied to "children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland" and "children from other countries in whose case the Minister is satisfied that they are resident in this country as political refugees."

English language support teachers were introduced in 1999 and numbers were increased annually. The number of language support teachers rose from 260 in 2001/2002 to 1,500 in 2007, to over 2100 in 2009. (DES 2011)

From 2000-2008 Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT), a not-for-profit campus company of Trinity College, was funded by the Department of Education and Science to support the teaching of English as a second language in primary and post-primary schools.

In-service training was provided and a range of documents to help language support teachers were published (Lyons and Little 2009). These documents are currently hosted by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

IILT established English Language Proficiency (ELP) benchmarks – that are based on the first three proficiency levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001). By specifying learning outcomes at three levels, the benchmarks facilitated teacher planning as well as the placement of newcomer students. Between 2000 and 2007 the ELP benchmarks and an ever-expanding range of teaching/learning and other support materials were mediated to teachers via a programme of twice-yearly in-service seminars. Regular interaction with ESL teachers and their schools has been fundamental to the work of IILT.

IILT revised all the materials it had developed for the post-primary sector (IILT 2007). In 2007 IILT was obliged to suspend in-service provision due to lack of funding and human resources.

Translation of information into 6 languages (DES press release 21.02.07)

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) published *Intercultural Guidelines for Primary Schools* in 2005. *Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School* was published later in 2006. The guidelines promote the development of awareness and understanding of inclusivity, equality and reciprocal learning in a pluralist environment.

With the issuing of Circular 53/07, additional teacher support was allocated by DES to primary and post primary schools, determined by the number of enrolled pupils for whom English is a second language and the associated assessed levels of pupils' language proficiency.

The Agreed Programme for Government 2009 contains a discussion on language support.

The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) was set up in 1998 in order to provide advice and to develop initiatives to combat racism and to work towards a more inclusive, intercultural society in Ireland. By bringing together government and non-government organizations the independent expert body aimed to provide expertise

and advice, to inform policy development and to promote understanding and celebration of cultural diversity.

The National Action Plan against Racism (NPAR) (2005 – 2008), enhanced protection against racism and discrimination and aimed to drive both government policy and community awareness raising initiatives. NPAR included representatives from a wide range of key stakeholders - Government bodies, IBEC the social partners, Congress, representatives of the voluntary and community sector), minority communities and the NCCRI.

In 2010 the Irish Government published the Intercultural Education Strategy (IES). The IES policy document (2010-2015) is based on EU Principles of Integration and aims to ensure that education reflects and respects the diversity of, languages values, beliefs and traditions in Irish society (Education Act, 1998). IES aims to ensure that inclusion and integration within an intercultural education environment become the norm. One of the key goals of the IES is to 'support students in the language of instruction.'

The aims of IES are:

- that all students are proficient in the language of instruction, on both an academic and cognitive level
- that migrant students are enabled to maintain a connection with their mother tongue and culture.

In the Irish context, the political and constitutional goal is for the integration of immigrants. Subsequent to the appointment of a Minister for Integration in 2007, a statement of policy entitled *Migration Nation: Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management* was published in 2008. This statement of policy outlines the aims of the government in relation to providing the "Department of Education and Science and the bodies under its aegis" with a range of policies, structures and resources, as a response to "the need to integrate immigrants and their families (p.59).

In the programme for government section (p.58), the promotion of "successful integration in our schools," is underpinned by the aspiration that "our education system and personnel are well equipped for a multi-cultural society." In order to meet these aspirations the specific strategies are outlined clearly in the statement of policy. These include:

- The inclusion of English language training for adult migrants and an increase of language support teachers in schools, from 1,450 to 1,800.
- The establishment of a dedicated Integration Unit in the Department of Education and Science
- A Ministerial Council on Integration to be set up to assist and reflect the changing dynamics of migration into Ireland, and to establish future policy needs.
- Involvement with the OECD thematic review of migrant education policy and practice
- The establishment of a working group to consider the analysis of the current state of language education in schools in Ireland, published by the Department and the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe

The policies as outlined in *Migration Nation* demonstrate the prominence which is assigned to the concept of integration in the Irish context. Collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGO's) who are advocates for change at national level and whose contribution reflects their continuing connection with the migrant community is outlined in the statement of policy.

In order to facilitate integration, as envisaged in the *Migration Nation* statement of policy, substantial government funding is required. The reduction of state funding as a result of the austerity measures from 2008 onwards, curtailed the implementation of the proposals, plans and strategies for the successful integration of migrants. An outline of government cuts to education of immigrant children will be presented in the next section 1.4.2 and the impact of the cuts will be discussed further in the literature review, 2.3.1.

The challenges posed by immigration and internal EU mobility flows can be addressed through education policies. The philosophical assumption underpinning EU and Irish government policy on education is that the benefits of successfully implemented school-based measures will transfer to the wider society. Heckmann (2008) reported that a major function of schooling is integration into the culture of the receiving country. The European Commission authorised report found that language issues are a core part of the integration process, that immigrant parents generally do not seek contact with school and that every single school matters in relation to the academic and social integration of immigrant children. The importance of education is stressed as one of the "priority areas for policy intervention"

regarding the integration "of those who are new in a society" (Council of the European Union, 2004). This particular EU report states that scholastic underachievement of migrant youth "should be avoided" through policy intervention.

1.4.2 Irish Government Budgetary cuts in Education Supports

A rapidly changing economic and policy climate occurred during the period of this doctoral study, 2009 to 2012. Government revenue decreased dramatically due to the global banking crisis in 2008 and the subsequent collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy. As recession took hold cutbacks in the public service have impacted on education at all levels.

Circular 53/07 was rescinded and replaced by Circular 0015/2009 which resulted in changes to the teacher allocation ratio from 18:1 to 19:1 and a reduction in EAL provision along with cuts in finance to support programmes for disadvantaged students have a direct impact on the education of children of migrants. The criteria for the allocation of language support teachers to schools, was amended, starting in September 2009. The number of language support teachers available to schools with EAL students was reduced. A cap was placed on the number of language support teachers a school could employ. Arising from government decisions in Budget 2009, the school in this study lost two EAL teachers and the embargo on the filling of middle management position in schools resulted in a loss of the Integration Officer in 2010.

Government cuts to language support dug deeper in 2012 as DES issued Circular 0009/2012 entitled *Staffing arrangements in Post-Primary Schools for the 2012/13 school year* which directed post primary schools to merge learning support and language support into a single allocation process.

The Department undertook to provide additional support for schools with *significant* concentration of pupils that require language support. Such schools would be required to appeal to the independent Staffing Appeal Board.

The circular stipulates that schools which currently have 2 temporary language support posts in the 2011/12 school year will be automatically allocated 1 permanent post for the 2012/2013 school year. Likewise schools that currently have 1 temporary language support post in the 2011/12 school year will be automatically allocated 0.5 of a permanent language

support post for the 2012/13 school year. Such measures implemented in recessionary times, including changes in the criteria for allocating language support teachers, will negatively affect the academic progress and social integration of newcomer students in Irish second level schools.

The impact of reduced language support provision of in-service training on intercultural education and differentiated teaching would impact on the education of children of migrants will be discussed in 2.3.1. The elimination of middle management positions and the reduction in guidance counselling provision reduces supports for all students including newcomer students. In a period of economic downturn, provision for newcomer students should remain a priority (CiCe 2011). Annette Dolan, Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) stated in 2010 that "minority ethnic students have been disproportionately hit by government cutbacks." It is against this backdrop that the current study was undertaken.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out the contextual background to the rapid growth in immigration into Ireland from 1993 to 2011 and demonstrated how this growth resulted in increased numbers of immigrant children in Irish classrooms. The influx of immigrant children has led to greater linguistic and cultural diversity in many Irish schools. The emergence of a heterogeneous group of students who became known as newcomers prompted this study. The study is based on the premise that academic and social integration of migrant students is critical to their success in the educational system. The purpose and rationale for the study, the theoretical framework and the research questions as outlined in this chapter pivot around the central issue of the need for immigrant students to experience academic and social integration in the school and the obligation on the school management and teachers to foster a level of integration among the newcomer students and their families through a support system.

A depiction of the school setting and support provision was given along with statistical data on numbers and percentages of newcomer student distribution throughout the year groups.

A discussion on the concept of integration, from the literature and from reports, included an outline of EU and Irish Government policy response in relation to provision of supports for academic integration at school level and recommendations for the support of integration in the wider community. This concept is further explored through the Literature Review in Chapter 2.

From 2009 onwards there has been a range of Government budgetary cutbacks that has resulted in a constriction in the resources available to children of migrants in schools. The impact of these cuts will be examined in the course of the study.

The study will draw on the literature that examines the international experiences of integrating migrant children in schools as well as the emerging research from Ireland on this topic. A synthesis and a discussion of the relevant literature will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

> Put simply, working with literature is an essential part of the research process. It inspires, informs, educates, and enlightens. It generates ideas, helps form significant questions and is instrumental in the process of research design. (Zina O' Leary 2004 p.66)

2.0 Introduction

Education is a key area where inclusion, exclusion belongingness and discrimination can be explored. As the presence of immigrant children in Irish schools is a new normality the integration and academic achievement of children of migrants must be one of the chief aims of schools (Heckmann, 2008). The reviewed literature addresses the overarching themes of academic and social integration incorporating the issues of English language proficiency, policy and practice, inter ethnic and intercultural relations, power and inequality, the 'deficit' lens, parental engagement, familial and socio-cultural context and well-being.

Early forays into the literature (Chapter 1) emboldened the researcher to excavate deeper into the literature on school experiences of first generation children of migrants. A clear link between academic achievement and social integration was established in the literature newcomer students navigate the school setting on a daily basis. As explained in the concept of integration is at the core of the investigation and the discussion on integration which was initiated in 1.4.1., is continued in this chapter in section 2.1 where the concept of multiculturalism is discussed. Section 2.2 addresses the development of interculturalism and how the concept seems to have become the favoured integration strategy in Ireland's policy documents.

In section 2.2.1 the international and national literature on social and academic integration is discussed. Cognitive, relational and behavioural aspects of the students integration, including well-being is discussed. Integration is closely linked to proficiency in the host language. Facilitation of the speedy acquisition of the host language, which in this study is English, accelerates the integration process and impacts on scholastic achievement and socialisation with indigenous Irish peers.

Section 2.3 of this chapter will trace the development of English Language supports for newcomer students from 1999 to 2012 tracing the ad hoc beginnings to piecemeal and haphazard support and moving on the demise of provision due to education cutbacks (2.3.1).

Section 2.4 introduces the concept of power imbalance into the equation- an issue illuminated by Gramsci's theory on cultural hegemony and Bourdieu's theory on social and cultural capital (2.4.1) followed by a discussion on the 'deficit' lens phenomenon (2.4.2). In section 2.4.3 the author concentrates on inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relationships between newcomer and indigenous students including the links between English language proficiency and power differentials. Section 2.5 addresses the topic of parent engagement with the school and includes the recommendations from Includ-Ed and the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) to assist schools with outreach to parents and to the community.

Familial context related to the migration experience and socio-economic factors are discussed in 2.5.1 and again the issue of student wellbeing arises. In Section 2.6 the researcher develops the discussion (begun in 1.3.2) on the theoretical framework for this study prior to the final concluding section (2.7).

For the purpose of this study the researcher addresses the concept of culture in the context of cultural diversity in the school setting, and the influences of multiculturalism and interculturalism on education. The cultural capital and cultural hegemony theories are addressed in this study. The concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism will be discussed in the next section.

2.1 Multiculturalism

The quest for social justice and human rights for all and a more equitable education system for ethnically diverse students shaped the development of multicultural education in the United States (Grant 2008; Gay 1997,2000). According to Dr. James A. Banks, who is regarded as the founder of the multicultural education discipline, multiculturalism came out of the black struggle of the 60's and 70's and grew to include other groups such as women, people with disabilities, low income and other ethnic groups. An equitable and effective educational system for ethnically and culturally diverse students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds is the philosophy underpinning multicultural education.

Banks conceptualizes multicultural education as a field that consists of five dimensions. The dimensions are based on his research, observations, and work in the field since the late 1960s. He contends that when the education system and the curriculum is based on the dominant culture, minority students are excluded. He advocates what is termed as *content integration* that is the teaching of knowledge about the histories, cultures, and the contributions of diverse groups. Content integration contributes to *knowledge construction* which aims to challenge cultural assumptions and bias in the curriculum. He assigns a *prejudice reduction* dimension to his theory in order to help students develop more democratic attitudes and values in relation to race and social class and aims to contribute to the development of more positive racial attitudes and an urge to increase academic achievement among minorities. The use of techniques and methods that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, and low-status population is referred to as *equity pedagogy* and results in an *empowerment of the school culture* (Banks 1993).

Reforming the school and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality is as relevant today as it was at the beginning of the movement as an increasing number of countries experience diversity in the cultural and ethnic composition of their population. The author of this study contends that the five dimensions as outlined can be applied to Irish schools in order to meet the needs of all students in an increasingly pluralistic society. It is important that the content integration is considered in the form of knowledge construction via a curriculum which reflects the diversity in Irish schools. Despite the stated intercultural aims in policy documents such as NCCA (2006) and Migration Nation (2008), the curriculum remains largely ethnocentric as immigrant groups are not represented in a significant way either in the curriculum, in the school personnel or in school organisation.

Banks (2012) opines that the future of America lies in 'the education of low income kids of colour and second language speakers' because in the US these groups are the "fastest growing population in the schools." Can we apply this outlook to Europe and to Ireland ? The growth in numbers of second language/other language speakers has become a feature of Irish classrooms from the early nineties onwards (Lodge and Lynch 2004; Smyth et al. 2009; Lyons and Little 2009; Curry 2011; Devine 2011). While the majority of immigrants in Ireland come from Eastern European countries, asylum seekers, refugees and work permit holders from Africa, Asia and South America are part of the composition, all of whom are

second or other language speakers and a significant proportion of whom are from low-income families. As immigrants come from all continents the Irish education system has witnessed an increase of 'kids of colour' (Banks 2012) in the classroom.

Bryan (2010) argues that immigration as a response to Ireland's economic needs during the boom (as outlined in 1.1) led to what he terms as "corporate- style multiculturalism" which defines migrants almost exclusively as economic units and reflects state policies which suggest that immigrants are welcome so long as they benefit Irish society economically- a stance that hinders meaningful inclusion. The state response to the need for English language provision suggests a lack of commitment towards meaningful integration of migrant families. The language provision narrative, as delineated in 1.4, illustrates a sluggish response in relation to the education needs of children of migrants.

The multicultural education paradigm has been criticised as for 'vagueness' (Irwin 2009) while Gundara and Portera (2008, p.464) refer to the 'early problem-centred multicultural approaches' by educators and policy makers, which tended to focus on provision of second language teaching, while perceiving the first language as being a problem. The failure to make connections between the first and the second languages as conduits to curriculum access, led to issues of difference being constructed as 'deficit', thereby creating distance between majority and minority culture.

The 'failure of multiculturalism' stance focuses on the inadequacies of the policies in addressing issues of integration in western democracies where minority and majority cultures can be found "living alongside each other but in separate spheres" (ICoCo 2012). In its drive to promote linguistic and cultural identity for minorities, the policies of multiculturalism failed to inspire a two way conversation between the majority and the minority culture Sondhi (2009). The multicultural approach fell short of achieving the levels of interaction or equality as envisaged or in the case of Britain, is criticised for its limited impact on the reduction of racism (Watt 2006). In recent years leading European political leaders have laid the blame for the failure to integrate on state multiculturalist policy (Merkel 2010; Cameron 2011; Sarkozy 2011). The concept of interculturalism has replaced multicultural rhetoric throughout the Western world and is underscored by the "positive relations between communities" (ICoCo 2012) and "interaction at the cultural borderline" (Bleszynska 2008).

In the next section the author will discuss the aims and objectives of interculturalism and its influence on policy pertaining to education in the Irish context.

2.2 Intercultural strategies for integration

Interculturalism shares the same philosophical underpinnings as multiculturalism as both movements evolved in the context of socio-economic and cultural changes during the twentieth century and as a response to globalisation and its corresponding migrations.

The term interculturalism expresses a belief that we all become personally enriched by coming in contact with and experiencing other cultures, and that people of different cultures can and should be able to engage with each other and learn from each other. (NCCA, 2006, pp. i-ii).

Interculturalism rather than multiculturalism has been adopted in key public policy developments in Ireland. In 2005, the Irish government published the National Action Plan against Racism (NPAR) a welcome development from previous "ill defined/ad hoc assimilatationist policies" (Watt 2006). Interculturalism as an approach to diversity was embraced by organisations such as NCCRI (1998) and in the Irish Government policy response in the form of guidelines for primary and secondary schools (NCCA2005:2006), thus becoming the chosen approach to a more inclusive education and society with a particular emphasis on interaction and equality. The guidelines covered school planning, policy development the whole school environment. The "Intercultural Education Strategy, (IES) 2010- 2015" followed in 2010.

The education system can prepare immigrants and their descendants to be more successful and more active participants in society through integration which is "innately intercultural" (Mac Einri 2007, p.230) in the "active and frequent interaction between migrants and host society." Integration is best understood at the level of individual experience in the political, economic, socio cultural spheres of everyday life Feldman et al. (2008).

Despite Ireland statistically becoming a country of net immigration in 1996, Boucher (2008) criticizes Irish governments' policy as "laissez-faire", "patch-work" and "piecemeal" rather than systematic and may lead to a socially exclusive future, rather than a socially cohesive one. The political parties in Ireland are described by Fanning (2007 p.20) as "monocultural entities" who preside over the "narrow" top-down debates about immigration with "relatively

little explicit discussion."   Both Mac Einri and Fanning point out that debate regarding integration is insufficient.

On the other hand Lodge and Lynch (2004) and Devine (2011) have conceded Irish policymakers have begun to acknowledge a range of antiracist, intercultural and equality commitments and mention that legislative context in Ireland has been influenced by the international developments, conventions and agreements such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 1950) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989). The 1995 *White Paper on Education - Charting our Education Future* promotes equality, pluralism and interculturalism as key considerations underpinning educational policy. A clear move towards ensuring that education systems are inclusive, respect diversity, and promote a learning environment where all students are encouraged and assisted to achieve to the best of their abilities has been expressed in rhetoric. Does this translate to practice in the form of supports?

The political significance of integration and immigrants was boosted in 2007 with the appointment of Mr. Conor Lenihan to the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Education and Justice, Equality and Law Reform with special responsibility for integration policy. Recognising that a key challenge facing Government and Irish society is the imperative to integrate people of different cultures, ethnicity, language and religion *Migration Nation* was published in 2009. The dedicated Integration Unit was established in the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 2007, which worked closely with the Minister for Integration and with his office. The main focus of the work of the Integration Unit in 2008 was the preparation of an Intercultural Education Strategy (IES).

Irwin (2009) queries the implementation of the intercultural programmes proposed by NCCRI (1998), NCCA (2005;2006) and Migration Nation (2008) and the Intercultural Education Strategy (IES 2010). He wonders where the power in decision making will lie. Will the teachers, the students, the policy makers, the majority communities or minority communities be trained and supported in order to implement intercultural strategies as outlined in these policy documents? Lentin (2010) stated that while many migrants, NGO's and academics welcomed the creation of the Minister of State for Integration post, she read it "as part of the EU's determination to batten down the hatches on inward migration."

Cautioning against state led integrationism, she elucidates the danger of a government agenda which does not draw on the expertise and activism of migrants.

Boucher (2008) states that Ireland lacks a national integration strategy, a national orientation programme, a language tuition policy and labour market training for immigrants as implemented in Australia, Canada and New Zealand and in recently receiving societies such as Norway, Sweden and Finland. In this context he asserts that the lack of a programme which supports cultural pluralism results in societal stratification rather than civic integration and tends to reinforce and reproduce the already existing hierarchies of wealth, status and power (see Gramsci and Bordieu 2.4.1).

The cultural and linguistic diversity (Darmody & McCoy 2011; Devine 2011; Darmody, Tyrell and Song 2010; Lyons and Little 2009; Smyth 2009; Kearney 2008) of migrants with varying levels of entitlements resulted in what Lentin and Moreo (2012) called "differentialist categorizations." Feldman et al. (2008) identified the unequal treatment of EU and non-EU citizens in relation to work and education. Children of migrants from non-EU states are not entitled to government third level grants like their EU counterparts and are subject to the same fees as overseas students. This influences levels of integration both in the school setting and in the wider society. The researcher of this study found that the students from the EU states who aspired towards third level were highly motivated and well integrated but were in a minority among the newcomers.

The different sections of the literature reviewed in this chapter demonstrate that Government led dialogue in relation to the implications of cultural diversity in our education system and in the wider society has been lacking. The rhetoric in political statements and policy proposals in published state documents did not always translate into meaningful action by the state (Bryan 2010). The cessation of funding to advocacy and equality bodies such as NCCRI and NPAR, in 2008, sent out a negative message about state commitment to the work of advising, training, researching and documenting. The abolition of the Office for the Minister of Integration in 2011 weakened the capacity of the state to help the social integration of newly arrived migrant families. Extensive research demonstrated that state indifference regarding social policy on diversity has consequences for children in education who are marginalised or are perceived as different (Breen et al. 1990; McGovern 1993, Fanning 2007, Devine 2008).

Lentin and Moreo (2012) argue that state policy was and is a "pretence of integrationism." They point out that policy response during the boom years was underpinned by interculturalism "followed by a politics of diversity and integration" but since the economic recession took effect in Ireland from 2008 onwards, there is a lack of interest in immigration, interculturalism and integration. Assisting our newcomer students to attain their educational potential may not hold the political gravitas it once did, but many Irish schools continue to grapple with the challenge of supporting children of migrants to integrate academically and socially and this is being done without access to adequate resources.

2.2.1 Academic and Social Integration in schools

Academic integration in this study is conceived as the extent to which students are connected to, or engaged in what is going on in the classes, and has been shown to contribute to academic performance. (Steinberg, Brown, Dornbursch 1996, p.131.) Academic integration is closely linked to student engagement. Fredricks et al. (2008), presents three interrelated dimensions of student engagement:

- Cognitive
- Relational
- Behavioural

Suárez-Orozco (2008) defines cognitive engagement as the degree to which students are absorbed and intellectually involved in what they are learning. Relational engagement refers to the degree of connectedness a student feels between teacher, peers and other personnel in the school. Levitt, (1994), believes that a student's ability to adapt to the new school environment is contingent on developing these relationships.

Behavioural engagement is inextricably linked with academic engagement and encompasses a students' participation in and efforts to complete academic tasks. Evidence of a high level of behavioural engagement is reflected in regular attendance, appropriate classroom behaviour, satisfactory classroom participation, and submission of assignments on time (Suárez-Orozco 2008).

The interrelationship between the cognitive, relational and behavioural dimensions of student engagement with education, are featured as part of the social and academic integration issues which are addressed in this study. Membership of a school community and having a sense of

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belonging to that community constitute social integration. Goodenow and Grady (1993) present school membership and belonging as two similar constructs in terms of inclusion, respect and support which students personally feel is granted by peers and teachers. The link with student emotional wellbeing is also emphasised.

It is a central contention of this study that the extent to which migrant students are academically and socially integrated in their school will impact on their academic performance and that schools have a critical role to play in creating the conditions and supports that facilitate their social and academic integration.

While analysing the major themes from the literature, the author is cognizant that the heterogeneity of the immigrant population means that here are as many differences between immigrant children as there are similarities (Lyons and Little 2009, Smyth et al. 2009, Taguma et al. 2009). The development of a more inclusive intercultural society within the "myriad of contexts of immigration into Ireland" (Devine 2011, p.151), suggests that we employ the view that one size does not fit all, as we proceed to create the "conditions for interaction, equality of opportunity, understanding and respect" (Watt 2006).

While the process of immigration is sometimes imposed on adult individuals, for children this is even more likely to be the case, as the decision to migrate is usually made by their parents or relatives, hence the consequences of the immigration process on children may be more acute. The early years of arrival in the country are very difficult for children of school going age and the adjustment and adaptation difficulties can impact negatively on the young person's sense of belonging and sense of wellbeing hence studying the impact of migration on children is important (Molcho et al. 2011, p.184).

Proficiency in the language of the host country is usually a pre-requisite for competent engagement with the curriculum and ultimately academic success. Newcomer students who have either no English or low levels of proficiency in the language of the host country need to be extensively supported in the acquisition of the language of instruction. Proficiency in English and its impact on the integration of migrant students in schools is a recurring theme throughout the literature and will be examined in greater detail in the next section.

2.3 English Language Proficiency and Integration

Fluency in the language spoken in the country of destination is seen as an indicator for integration (Molcho et al. 2011). The central importance of newcomers' proficiency in English language is raised in the literature in connection with the language as a means of communication and as a precondition for integration and belonging (Healy 2007; Feldman et al. 2008).

Fanning et al. (2001); O'Loingsigh (2001); Lodge and Lynch (2004) contend that the lack of English language proficiency can result in exclusion from the peer group and this deficit is likely to create a barrier for parents and children alike when accessing the education system. Adeptness in the language of instruction is essential for all students to enable them access the curriculum effectively. Competence in the English language empowers the student and enables them to achieve more favourable educational outcomes. Fionda (2009) posits the view that language support praxis ideally should link effectively to the taught curriculum so that newcomer children are broadly assisted in extending their knowledge of the subject matter and in the development of abstract thinking and all the necessary skills for optimum classroom and examination performance.

In a 2009 submission to the DES Intercultural Education Policy, the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI), emphasised the central role of early and effective English language acquisition in enabling students access the highly differentiated curriculum and in the promotion of the highest standards of achievement. Newcomer children's chances for successful academic and social education are likely to be impeded by low levels of proficiency in English (Smyth et al. 2009). This is one of many challenges faced by schools in educating children of migrants.

The young migrant can often have a breath of perspective from exposure to different languages from an early age and from being immersed in more than one culture. Curry et al.,(2011). According to Feldman et al. (2008), migrants place a high value on learning English, and they also value proficiency in other languages, including those from their home country. The findings of one strand of Includ-Ed research (2006) highlighted the need for the recognition of the linguistic diversity found in today's student population.

The Includ-Ed Project is an Integrated Project of the European Commission which analyses educational strategies that contribute to overcome inequalities and promote social cohesion, and educational strategies that generate social exclusion. The project particularly focuses on vulnerable and marginalized groups, which includes what they term as the "traditionally silenced voices" of migrants and cultural minorities. One of the objectives of the project is the formulation of a strategy for the promotion of access to education.

One factor which increases the risk of failure at school for the immigrant population is the scarcity of support programmes for language learning (Mulcahy 2012).

Ireland has been slow to develop concrete strategies to support bilingual and multilingual students in schools (Ward, 2004). Notwithstanding the commitment to meeting the educational needs of all of its students a schools ability to provide intensive English language support for a migrant group is deeply influenced by government policy and provision of teaching resources in this area. The trajectory of English language support for migrant students in Irish second level schools will be traced in the next section.

2.3.1 English Language Support Policy (1999-2012)

The DES initiated the English Language Support Programme (ESLP) for schools in 1999 as a pilot project for immigrant adults and refugees. This project was expanded in 2000 to include all schools. Under the ESLP programme schools were granted additional teaching resources specifically for the provision of English language support to migrant students. The number of English language teachers allocated to schools rose from 260 in 2001/2002, to1,500 in 2007, and peaked at 2,100 in 2009. Prior to 2007 a DES directive instructed that a maximum of two language support teachers be allocated to schools for two years only. Evidence began to emerge from schools that English language support fell short of addressing the educational needs of the growing numbers of newcomer students entering the system at the height of the economic boom. This unrefined approach to English language support for migrant students led to serious deficiencies in the system. The cap was lifted in 2007, (Oireachtas.ie) (DES 2011).

Lyons and Little (2009) found that the implementation of English language support in secondary schools was poorly coordinated due to inadequate in-service and poor communication between EAL and subject teachers. Their findings were based on interviews with 85 language support teachers and coordinators in 70 post primary schools in 2007 and

2008. Lyons and Little (2009), argued that the shortcomings in DES policy which seem to ignore the international research which distinguishes between the fundamental interpersonal communication skills required for social interaction and the cognitive/academic language processing required for learning in schools.

The investigation was carried out by Lyons and Little, between June 2007 and September 2008, a period when numbers of language support teachers were increasing after the cap was lifted in 2007 (Circular 53/07). Despite the improvement in provision as a result of the lifting of the cap, (Lyons and Little 2009 p3) concluded that their report findings 'do not make encouraging reading.'

Language Support for newcomer students was reduced in 2009 again when Circular 53/07 was rescinded and replaced by Circular 0015/2009 which resulted in changes to the teacher allocation ratio from 18:1 to 19:1 and a reduction in English language teaching provision. The Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) and the 'The English Language Support Teachers' Association (ELSTA) expressed concern at the re-imposition of the cap on the number of language support teachers allocated to schools.

Language support was further eroded in 2012 when DES issued Circular 0009/2012 entitled *Staffing arrangements in Post-Primary Schools for the 2012/13 school year* which directed post primary schools to merge 'learning support and language support into a single allocation process'. Circular 0009/2012 stipulates that schools which currently have 2 temporary language support posts in the 2011/12 school year will be automatically allocated 1 permanent post for the 2012/2013 school year. Likewise schools that currently have 1 temporary language support post in the 2011/12 school year will be automatically allocated 0.5 of a permanent language support post for the 2012/13 school year.

The DES undertook to provide additional support for schools with *significant* concentration of pupils that require language support but such schools would be required to appeal to the independent Staffing Appeal Board. The assumption that students in need of language support belonged to the same category as students with special educational needs (denounced by Lyons and Little 2009) became a reality in DES policy in 2012. The notion that English language support and learning support are pedagogically compatible and are amenable to integrated delivery as conceived in the DES circular fails to take account of the complex and

diverse needs of the student with learning difficulties and of the migrant child with little or no English.

Although inward migration began to decrease from 2008 onwards, there was still an inflow of 57,300 in the year to April 2009 which is equivalent to the 2004 levels of immigration and still significant (CSO, 2009). According to Census 2011 non-Irish nationals comprise 12% of the total population. The largest numerical increases were among the EU-12 national groups: specifically Polish, Lithuanians, and Romanians with a sharp increase in migrants from Hungary. The number of immigrants of Indian and Brazilian origins doubled in size between 2006 and 2011. In the context as outlined, the support for academic and social needs of newcomer students is inadequate. Since the onset of cutbacks a newcomer student now receives less support than the students who participated in this study the consequences of which go beyond the acquisition of English and its' direct link to academic progress. The social interaction of newcomers with teachers and peers is curtailed. Inherent in these austerity measures is the disregard for those children and their families displayed by a state whose cuts are hitting the disadvantaged and results in children of migrants being alienated from the social and academic mainstream of school life. The following section will review the literature on the inequality generated by social structure and lack of supports. The theories of Gramsci and Bourdieu will be applied to the experiences of migrant parents and children as they access education.

2.4 The Asymmetrical Power Equation

According to Curry et al.(2011), newcomer students with low proficiency in English are disempowered in their interactions or are more likely to be socially isolated in the school setting.

However not being able to speak to classmates, or being heavily dependent on others to do so, can produce power differentials which can be easily exploited by anybody (Curry et al. 2011, p.58).

The newcomer child is placed in a disadvantaged position in relation to the configuration of power and position played out in the school setting. In a study of minority francophones, First Nation and African Caribbean students in Canadian high school, Cummins (1997) emphasises how the immigrant student is disempowered by the devaluation of their language and culture both in the education system and in the wider society.

Low proficiency in English language skills can leave an immigrant child vulnerable and sometimes subjected to bullying by children from the majority culture (Curry et al. 2011, Molcho et al. 2011). The power differentials played out in the school setting replicate the distribution of power in the wider Irish society where minority languages are subordinated and superior status is accorded to the English language, where newcomer students can be referred to as "non English speaking," "non Irish" or "non national." In the next section the issues of power and its perpetuation by structures in society, including education, as propounded by Bourdieu and Gramsci. The relevance of their theories to issues of exclusion and barriers to education experienced by minority groups in modern Europe is discussed.

2.4.1 Application of Gramsci and Bourdieu theories to this study

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) wrote about culture and political leadership and expounded his theory of cultural hegemony, which describes how states use cultural institutions to maintain power in a capitalist society. Hegemony can be defined as the acquisition of power and social control via the establishment and distribution of public knowledge (Gramsci,1971). His writings include commentary on education as schooling serves some role in the transmission of ideas in society. He believed that "the educational relationship" between "teacher" and "student" is reciprocal, goes beyond the institution into wider society and exists for every individual relative to other individuals on a national and international level. Hall (1986) contended that Gramsci's perspectives on how education institutions can perpetuate the power structures in society remain relevant today and also suggested that even though Gramsci did not write directly about racism, the themes of his works provide lines of connections to contemporary issues of race and ethnicity.

Despite the open access to education in most Member States being legally binding, The European Union Agency for fundamental Rights (FRA 2007, p.95) drew attention to the barriers to education throughout the EU, faced by vulnerable groups such as children of Roma, Sinti and Travellers and children of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. Cultural minorities and immigrant populations can be particularly vulnerable to educational and social exclusion since students in these groups usually experience practices that result in their segregation (Include-Ed 2009, p.23). Segregation in schools weakened the ability of the school to uphold values of inclusion, friendships and bonds between the children of migrants and their peers (European Commission Green Paper, 2008).

According to Fionda (2009), the school curriculum values cultural and linguistic capital that many of these students have little prior experience of and, via hegemony, such exclusion is maintained. This exclusion limits the potential of such groups.

Education can be viewed as a state tool or agency. The school system in post-colonial Ireland (from the 1920's) was shaped by the hegemonic forces of Church and State (Fanning 2002; Lodge and Lynch 2004). The education system was a key tool for the promotion of a nationalist and Catholic ideology which was reflected in a curriculum which presented "a narrow vision of 'Irishness,'" Nowlan (2008). School patronage, teacher training and state policy, practice and provision remain hegemonic in terms of student admission and primary teacher training colleges. Immigrant families encounter barriers in accessing education due to such state endorsed school practices and state policy on EAL support creates and perpetuates inequality as government budget cuts impacted disproportionally on disadvantaged groups such as students with disabilities and other minority groups like travellers and children of migrants.

Policy on migrant status and citizenship, impacts negatively on the children of migrants in education. Pierre Bourdieu advanced the intellectual discourse on inequality through the concept of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1986). The stratification of society through cultural and social capital is reproduced within the different social groups and in this way inequality is perpetuated. The systematic accumulation of capital through attitudes and knowledge needed to succeed in education and in society, confers power and status.

Without access to information, many migrant students may be unable to effectively participate in social structures affecting their education and in their community. Lacking this culturally valuable knowledge and not having internalised the social norms of the school and the society that it is rooted in, places many migrant student in a disadvantaged position from which to negotiate the road map to educational success. Cumulative disadvantage is a process by which individuals or groups carry forward the disadvantages of early life through different stages of their lives Darmody (2013). Citing Brekke and Mastekassa (2008) she states that many migrants experience cumulative disadvantage. Children of migrants, many of whom have already experienced disadvantage are facing life in reduced economic circumstances (family) and in schools where expenditure cuts have impacted adversely on language and other supports.

Linguistic capital can be understood as a form of embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990) as linguistic ability represents a means of communication and self-presentation. In the context of the Irish school setting, having proficient English can be perceived as social capital and without this proficiency newly arrived children of migrants are marginalised(Curry et al. 2011). The linguistic and cultural habitus of EAL learners is rich and varied but undervalued in the Irish school setting because it deviates from the habitus occupied by the dominant group Fionda (2009). Immigrant students with low levels of proficiency in English are viewed with "an underlying deficit view" (Nowlan p262), despite having linguistic cultural capital which can contribute to the resources of any school but is distinct from the often (more) homogeneous linguistic and cultural experiences of students born in Ireland. As cultural capital is dependent on the context and the society (Darmody and McCoy 2011, p.147) the cultural capital (language, culture specific knowledge and skills) acquired in one country "may be devalued in the immigrant context."

For the children of migrants, the building of social capital in the form of relationships with teachers and the formation of positive social relationships with peers is compromised and their ability to internalise the social and cultural norms of their new environment is inhibited (Devine 2011). A component of the asymmetrical power equation is the perception of migrants through the "deficit"lens.

2.4.2 The "deficit" lens

A number of studies allude to the deficit models of diversity which focus on what minority students lack rather than what they have. Fanning et al. (2011) found that teachers may inadvertently exclude some ethnic and racial minority students due to their perceived lack of English and that when second language learners are placed in a "needing help" role they are left dependent on native speakers in order to access learning. Nowlan (2008, p.262) found that in relation to school practice, provision for EAL learners was "perceived as peripheral and problematic."

Gundara and Portera (2008, p.463) were critical of policies which place the emphasis on the acquisition of English in order to better absorb them into the prevailing education structures and systems without due consideration to the connection between first and second language learning, or the teaching of second language and "its role in enabling or disabling access to the school curriculum." This scenario has implications for relationships between the

newcomer students and other students in the school, an issue which according to Gundara and Portera tends to be neglected.

What is taught on the curriculum conveys an important the message to the newcomer student regarding their position in the education system. Ethnocentrism has manifested itself over the years in the manner in which the voice of the Travellers has been excluded from curricular content (Lodge and Lynch, 2004). Second level subjects such as CSPE and SPHE contain sections on diversity but these are perceived as "marginal" subjects on the curriculum (40minutes per week and not offered at Senior Cycle). The curriculum continuously endorses a distinctive Irish "we" as settled, white and Catholic, that marks out the traveller and the immigrant as "other" (Devine 2011, p.85). A curriculum which reflects the diversity in our society helps prepare all students for active citizenship while fostering respect for difference alongside the ability to critique cultural values and norms (Billings 1995). In the context of this study the researcher believes that the lack of curricular recognition for minority groups can operate as a barrier to social and academic integration children of migrants.

Research by Include-Ed (2006) and Nowlan (2008) demonstrates that separation of students from ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma) and second language learners (e.g. immigrants) increases dropout levels and racism. Perpetuating the deficit model can lead to stereotyping and lower expectations on the part of both students and teachers Withdrawal of students from mainstream classes is almost certain to limit their social engagement and friendship building with peers, both native and newcomer, and impacts negatively inter-ethnic and inter-cultural relations.

2.4.3 Inter-ethnic and Inter-cultural relations

It is widely acknowledged that school is the pivotal point for interaction between the migrant and indigenous children. Curry et al. (2011) stated that school is the only site in which migrant and local children regularly interact. Devine (2011) found that inter-ethnic friendships were sparse at secondary school and she observed that student friendships developed along ethnic lines. This was especially evident in the clustering of students during break times when friendship groups developed with children from the same country of origin or with other migrant students. The gap between children of migrants and their indigenous Irish peers in school was also reflected outside of school.

Where some of the students interviewed mentioned their difficulty in making friends with their indigenous Irish peers, their feeling of relative isolation, particularly after school was notable. (Devine 2011, p.144)

Inter-ethnic relationships vary 'from open and positive, to negative, hostile and derogatory' (Curry et al. 2011, p.6) and studies found that name calling occurred in locations where there is no adult gatekeeper, places which the authors identify as the

> back stage' areas of school - schoolyards corridors, toilets and going to and from school, out of view and hearing of teachers. (Curry et al. 2011, p.10)

Reflecting on peer to peer relations in Irish schools (Smyth at al. 2009, p.28) found that second level immigrant students were more likely to suffer from bullying and racial abuse.

For the purpose of this research, the concept of xenophobia will relate to any hostility or negative attitude or behaviour shown towards foreigners (Osman 2009) and will draw on the Oxford Dictionary definition of an "intense or irrational dislike or fear of people from other countries" (http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/xenophobia?q=xenophobia).

The word "racism" is a loaded term and in this study the researcher draws on the Oxford definition of racism and theories of racism as follows: "the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races: *theories of racism* prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior"

http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/racism?q=racism

The prevalence of racially motivated aggression towards newcomer students was further corroborated in the findings of the Behaviour and Attitudes (B&A) Survey on Racism, Inter-culturalism and Resources for Minority Ethnic Students, (2010) incorporating the Recommendations of the TUI Equality Council showed that nearly 50% of teachers that responded were aware of a racist incident in their school or college in the month prior to the survey being carried out.

The process of immigration is usually imposed on children, as in the case of those who seek asylum, and those who migrate for economic reasons when decisions are made by parents or

relatives. As with adults, child immigrants leave their homeland and settle in a new country, often with different norms and values, and need to adapt to a sometimes markedly different culture and socioeconomic conditions, often facing discrimination and racism (Berry, 1997).

Children from "visible minority" groups are bullied more than their peers, facing racist slurs as well as physical violence Killoran, (2012). Racist taunts and actions heighten the dynamics of difference which operate in the socio- cultural world of the school and impedes the development of positive and respectful inter-cultural and inter-ethnic relations. Unable to penetrate the invisible barrier generated by othering, the newcomer is locked out of the social milieu of the classmates. A sense of isolation is commonly reported among migrant students and has been found to impact negatively on their sense of wellbeing.

The upheaval, caused by inter country and within country migration may influence the mental health and wellbeing of the young person. Molcho et al. (2011) found, from studies on mental health and wellbeing of immigrant children in Europe, US and Israel, that the wellbeing of young people varied between countries. In Italy, Vieno et al. (2009, cited in Molcho et al. 2011) found that immigrant children suffered more psychosomatic symptoms and lower levels of life satisfaction, self-reported health issues, social integration problems and higher levels of victimisation compared with their local peers. Studies in the Netherlands did not find differences in the mental health of children of migrants and that of their peers (Vollebergh et al., 2005, cited in Molcho et al. 2011). Children of migrants are least likely to engage in substance abuse or in delinquent behaviour (Georgoades et al. 2006; Harris 2004, cited in Molcho et al. 2011) while studies in Israel, and the US found that immigrant children were more likely to be involved in such behaviour. It emerged from this study that in general, children of migrants experienced unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life, p compared to indigenous Irish peers, particularly in the early years of arrival in a new country.

In the opinion of this researcher, an opinion based on his extensive reading of the literature and his professional observations, the difference in the research findings outlined in the previous paragraph, are due to a number of factors.

Circumstances in country of origin. Migrants fleeing war, persecution or trauma would have more mental health issues than migrants who move voluntarily. Forced migration throws up many negative issues whereas voluntary migration can engender a number of positive outcomes.

Integration strategies in country of destination. Migrants who arrive in countries where they are assisted in a practical way with language acquisition, orientation programmes and employment, are more likely are more likely to report positive attitudes towards the migration experience.

Leaving childhood friends and extended family members. The migration process can impact negatively on the wellbeing of the young migrant person who leaves familiar surroundings, childhood friends and sometimes, other family members, behind.

On the other hand immigrant students can integrate and be pro-actively involved in their social integration. According to Devine (2011, p.145), availing of opportunities outside of the formal curriculum, facilitates "authentic social engagement." Friendship patterns across different ethnic groups can develop through involvement in sport, social events and other extra-curricular activities. Sport, especially football, plays an enormously important role in social inclusion of newcomer students and involvement bestows prestige for some migrant boys (Curry et al. 2011 p.97). The participants in this study who were involved in football articulated the benefits for socialisation with indigenous Irish and relationship building with the teachers involved. They were more likely to receive an end-of-year award from the school, lifting their individual profile and inspiring others. However, the numbers involved in team sports in this particular school were very low. Anecdotal evidence points to greater involvement at primary level as a response to persistent encouragement and support from school personnel.

2.5 Familial context and the role of parents

Parental engagement in school includes attending parent-teacher meetings and school events, and participating in school related voluntary activities such as fundraising. Parent educational involvement at home may include providing help with homework, discussing the child's schoolwork and school experiences.

The key role played by parents in the education development of their children has been widely researched (Heath & Clifford 1990; Kellaghan 1993; Kellaghan, Weir, O'hUllachain and Morgan 1995). Parental engagement with schools has been shown to be positively related to children's educational performance.

The school reproduces structural inequalities (Bernstein 1975; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) and its sorting function rewards parents whose values are aligned with the culture of the school. Social and cultural capital of most migrant families, is lost in migration, (Darmody and McCoy 2011) and often has less knowledge than others of the "invisible codes of power" (Carreon, Drake and Barton, 2005), which are embedded and pervasive in the school culture and structures. The positioning of most migrant families, outside of the culturally valuable knowledge and social norms of the school, results in a discontinuity between school and home. Lacking this culturally valuable knowledge and not having internalised the social norms of the school and the society that it is rooted in, places the immigrant parent in the "outsider" position (Mitchell, 2008; Schofield 2006), from which it is difficult to negotiate the road map to educational success.

The role of families in migration strategies and decision-making, the varied dynamics of family relationships, splits within families, and the reconfiguring of transnational networks and inter-generational relationships are aspects of the migration experience which impact on the lives of migrant families. Roles and dynamics within families may be reconfigured in complex and diverse ways through the migration process. Migration may involve not only joining or reuniting family members but also leaving relatives behind. In an investigation of post-2004, Polish migrants in London, (Ryan et al. 2009) found that a wide range of family circumstances existed, involving complex webs of intergenerational and transnational relationships. They found that parents of first generation immigrant children are highly likely to struggle in becoming a vital part in the schooling process as families are come to terms with life in a new country. Adaptation and repositioning is part of the migrant experience and for children of migrants engagement with the school structure is part of this.

The main barriers to parental involvement in their child's education process is lack of competency in the language of the host country, cultural differences, and the lack of knowledge of the education system and resources of the host country (OECD 2009) Considerable research on the adjustment issues related to transnational migration has pointed towards lack of confidence and low self-esteem on the part of the parents and lack of structured support from the school or lack of a forum for hearing the voice of the parent

Nowlan (2008, p.259) found that the majority of language support teachers surveyed had little contact with the parents of their language support pupils. Teachers express frustration at

the low level of response by immigrant parents to invitations to parent/teacher meetings and school events. A perception among teachers that many immigrant families are disinterested in their child's education is not uncommon. Refuting this erroneous presumption, Goldenberg (2004), found that parents of immigrant children place a high value on education and desire to be involved in their child's schooling. Valdes (1996) explicates the nuances of this argument in asserting that the involvement of migrant parents in their children's education may not be visible to the teachers but that it can be in culture - specific ways such as promoting good behaviour, hard work and respect for the authority of the school and the teacher.

Espinosa (1995) and Lopez (2001) draw attention to a subtle but significant cultural difference among Hispanic parents and families who are generally very supportive of their child's education but their reticence to become involved in their children's schooling is often misinterpreted by the school personnel as a lack of interest in education. Espinosa (1995), examined how cultural characteristics among Hispanic parents digressed from the norms of American socialization. A belief, highly prevalent among the lower income Hispanic group in the authority of the school emerged in Espinosa's research and resonated with the cultural attitude in a number of Latin American countries, where it is considered unacceptable for a parent to encroach on the domain of the school.

Varela (2008) pinpoints the school's failure to acknowledge and address the diversity of the student population as the biggest obstacles to parental involvement among the immigrant community. Taking this argument a step further, the school could be viewed as equally if not more culpable in the failure to engage with all of its constituent parts specifically with the immigrant sector. This disconnection between the migrant families and the school create the ideal conditions for the development of misunderstandings that are antithetical to the notion of the school, child and home working in a harmonious relationship founded on respect and a unity of purpose based on the aim of attaining the best possible educational outcomes for the young person.

The Immigration Council of Ireland (ICI) researched the issue of school parent community links and published a document entitled Pathways to Parental Leadership. The aim of the ICI project is to foster migrant parents' involvement in the schools lives of their children and is guided by the underlying philosophy that parents who feel welcome, settled and confident in

a community are in a much better position to support their child in school. The ICI undertook research in schools as well as comparative research on international practices and proceeded with what is essentially a toolkit for schools, parents and community groups, in order to guide the process of developing the parents' knowledge about the school through initiatives, activities and the facilitation of family-school relationships.

The underlying rationale for the programme is the belief, that as parents learn about, and familiarise themselves with the school, their confidence will increase, and they will be empowered to become involved with the Parents Association or the Board of Management of the school. To build the parents knowledge of the school the following actions are recommended:

- Induction events
- Bulletin boards
- Photo exhibitions
- Websites
- Welcoming walls
- Interpreting and Translation services

Additionally the ICI initiative includes a mentoring programme run by parents for parents which aims to:

- Bridge the gaps between clusters of parents from different countries
- Help children of migrants do better in school.

The Includ-Ed Project similar to ICI, recommended that interventions should reach out beyond the school to the whole family and the community 'in order for people to achieve success.' Family education can 'help immigrant and minority children make more progress in school' (Includ-ed 2009). Recommended supports include:

- Free language tuition to parent
- The publication of brochures in the families' native languages
- The provision of interpreters for parents to help with enrolment and monitoring of progress at school.

Engaging immigrant parents in a collaborative and meaningful way with the school would contribute hugely to social and academic integration. The willingness or the ability of parents to become involved with schools in a way that supports the social and academic engagement of their children may be influenced by a range of social and economic factors which will be discussed in the next section.

2.5.1 Family context, Socio Economic Factors and well-being

According to Molcho et al. (2011), immigrant families tend to be less affluent and first generation newcomer children were particularly likely to be in less affluent families. From a study of Chinese, Indian, Lithuanian and Nigerian migrants in Ireland, Feldman et al. (2008) found that incomes were apportioned between family in Ireland and family members in their own countries. Indian and Nigerian respondents were most likely to provide financial support to adults and children in Ireland and in their home countries. Monetary obligations to elderly parents, siblings and extended family leave the migrant family financially short, thus impacting on the education of the newcomer child. Migrant families with economic difficulties have another barrier placed in their path as they navigate a costly educational system. Economic disadvantage excludes such students from extra-curricular activities, trips and the TY year, aspects of school life that are very important to their social integration and sense of belonging.

Feldman et al. (2008) found that migrants with well integrated children expressed a high degree of belonging to Irish society. Findings from the same study also suggested that migrant families felt a dual sense of dislocation – from the country of origin and from Ireland and interviewees who has lived in Ireland for a long period experienced a change in attitudes to migrants in recent years. Living in post economic boom Ireland is creating a sense of alienation and in some instances is related to the changing environment and the racially based harassment of their children. Being at the receiving end of constant stereotypical jibes and comments and being told to "go home" dents the sense of belonging and can affect the psychological health of the family.

Alongside their vulnerability to the economic fortunes of the host country, migrant families are dependent on EU and Irish policies and practices. Decisions made at bureaucratic and government level impacts on the socio-economic status, well-being and integration of migrant families.

2.6 Themes from the literature linked with Theoretical Framework

As outlined in 1.3.2, the topics for investigation at the outset were: English language acquisition, academic participation, parental engagement with school, peer relationships, and involvement with extra-curricular activities. Subsequent to an extensive literature review as outlined in chapters 1 and excavated in greater detail in chapter 2, salient themes emerged which assisted with further building on the theoretical framework. Student wellbeing, belonging, power dynamics, racism/othering, intercultural policies and integration socio-economic factors, and the effects of government cutbacks on supports for children of migrants in education became the themes to be investigated in this study.

The notions of power and structures which are reproduced in society due to hegemonic forces are highly relevant to understanding the position of the immigrant family as they negotiate the power lines of the host country's educational institutions. The researcher found that Gramsci's theory on cultural hegemony and Bourdieu's theory on social and cultural capital, permeated most of the key themes.

2.7 Conclusions

As the student population at second level becomes more diverse in some Irish schools, educators are required to work a broad range of diversities. Exploring the educational experiences of first generation newcomers led to questions about the extent to which newcomer students were academically and socially integrated in the school system. Deep academic and social engagement in the education process appeared to be highly indicative of and predictive of scholastic success. The concepts of the academic and social integration of newcomer students in the education system of the host country are central to this study. This chapter opened with a discussion on the concept of multiculturalism-its origins and how the application of its ideals transformed the social and educational lives of the disenfranchised, particularly African-Americans . Changes to the whole philosophy related to diversity are outlined as interculturalism seemed to replace multiculturalism as an integration strategy.

Literature from international sources that drew on countries with lengthy histories of the education experiences of children of migrants such as America, Canada and a number of European states, notably the Netherlands provided rich sources of theoretical understandings of the dynamics of the academic and social integration of newcomer students. The emerging literature from Ireland's experience of the influx of immigrants particularly since the middle

of the 1990s was examined with a view to contextualising the unprecedented changes in migration patterns and the policy response to the state and institutions such as schools.

In the investigation of the central proposition that a newcomer student is more likely to achieve their educational potential if they are academically and socially integrated in the school system of the host country, a number of salient messages from the literature emerged. Proficiency in the language of instruction was found to be critical to academic success and highly supportive of social engagement and interaction with peers and with school personnel. The curtailment of EAL supports by the DES to Irish schools impacts seriously on the access a newcomer student has to English language classes and creates a barrier to scholastic achievement. Denying a newcomer student access to the speedy acquisition of the lingua franca is tantamount to denying them equality of access to education, and places them in a disadvantaged and vulnerable position in relation to interactions with peers, teachers and Irish society in general.

Engaging newcomer parents in the education of their children has emerged as a challenge for schools and reflects the communication difficulties that arise when parents may lack proficiency in English but it may also be connected to cultural practices and more complex societal nuances that relate to notions of social and cultural capital.

The lack of support and encouragement from the school and lack of resources for cultural mediation also emerge as barriers to parent engagement. A migrant's cultural capital may not be valued by the school and the family would not have built up the social networks that help them understand the invisible codes of the school and thereby enable them to navigate the structures and systems more effectively. Expertise and support programmes are available from relevant immigrant advocacy agencies to assist schools to build collaborative working relationships with newcomer parents.

The migrant family is vulnerable to the economic vicissitudes of the host country and budgetary cutbacks. Difficult economic conditions may result in children of migrants encountering hostility from some of the native students. Poor employment opportunities can lead to immigrant families struggling financially to support the educational costs of their children.

The key messages from the literature contributed to further refinement of the research questions which in turn assisted the author in the build-up of the theoretical framework, informed the research design and methodology which will be outlined in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The methodology used in this study was guided by the purpose of the study and by the need to answer the research questions. The theoretical assumption underpinning this study is that there is a strong association between the level of social and academic integration and attainment of educational potential. Schools have a critical role to play in creating the conditions and supports that facilitate the academic and social integration of newcomer students. The researcher decided to examine procedures and supports which assist students through the adjustment to a new school environment and contribute towards inclusion (Lasso and Soto, 2005). Development of friendship patterns, involvement in extra-curricular and inter-cultural/interethnic relationships (Fanning et al. 2001; O'Loingsigh 2001; Lodge and Lynch 2004; Devine 2011) will be investigated in this study and the pivotal link between language proficiency (academic integration) and friendship formation (Molcho et al. 2011; Curry et al. 2011).

In section 3.1 the researcher revisits the discussion on theoretical framework with an expansion on what he already discussed in 1.3.2. and 2.6. The rationale for choosing a predominantly qualitative paradigm is explained in 3.2. The merits of a case study for this investigation will be presented in section 3.3. As a minor part of the approach is quantitative, section 3.4 discusses the merits of mixed methods. Section 3.5 deals with the interview process as a method of data collection where the rationale for selection of interviewees is outlined.

In Section 3.6 the focus groups method is described including the rationale for the selection of migrant students.

Section 3.7 details the questionnaire method, followed by discussions on database and document analysis Sections 3.8 and 3.9, minor parts of the data collection. Contextualising the researcher as insider will make up the substance of section 3.10, prior to the summing up at chapter's end (3.11).

3.1 Theoretical Framework

As researchers, our view of the world influences our conceptual framework. The theoretical assumptions that guide this study were drawn from the researcher's view of the world, his professional experience as an educator and from the national and international literature, discussed in detail in Sections 1.3.2. and 2.6. The findings from the literature as well as the reflections, observations, aspirations, questions and goals of the researcher informed the research design and methodology.

The conceptual framework for qualitative investigation has to comprehend the breadth and depth of the research and be permissive of considerable variety (Seale et al. 2004 p2) and needs to build the 'theory' on what is being studied as 'a story about why acts, events, structure and thoughts occur.' (Sutton and Staw 1995, p.378). The development of the research question is influenced by ontological and epistemological perspectives. In this study the research question (section1.3.2) pivots around supports for the creation of a culturally relevant learning environment where newcomer students can experience academic and social integration and achieve their potential. The essence of the research question guides the decision-making in relation to methodology which will be discussed in the next sections.

3.2 Choosing a methodology

Methodology is the researcher's toolkit and is the means available to social scientists to investigate phenomena. These frameworks, more commonly known as paradigms, refer technically to two particular approaches to knowledge – how we seek knowledge and how we use it. The manner in which we position ourselves, as researchers, on the nature of knowledge and how knowledge is constructed influences our perspective on the "nature of knowing," the relationship between the "knower" and the "known" and the manner in which knowledge can be acquired. Methodology is is deeply influenced by the researcher's frameworks for thinking about the social world.

Philosophical assumptions influence the direction which the research will take. The philosophical questions that we pose about the nature of reality, guide and direct thinking and action and shape the way we do research. The way we go about researching that world can be related to our view of the world..

The notion of the paradigm as a world view with accompanying philosophical assumptions is voiced by Mertens (1998, 2003). Kuhn (1970 cited in Thomas 2009, p.73) defines a paradigm as a "fixed set of assumptions about the way inquiry should be conducted." A paradigm encompasses philosophy, theory, epistemology and assumptions about the social world along with methods, (Punch 1998 cited in O'Donoghue 2007 p.7). Cohen et al. 2000 p.17) acknowledged the proven success of the positivist paradigm in the field of natural science. However they reasoned that positivism was less successful in its application to the study of human behaviour. The authors argued that the "complexity" of human nature and the "intangible" quality of social phenomena were a mismatch for the positivist model.

Philosophers, social critics, creative artists and feminists, contended that the positivist perspective was a restricted image of the complexity of humans and became increasingly vociferous in their criticism of the positivist paradigm as an approach to the social sciences. The emergence of the positivist-post positivist debate demonstrated the need to recognize the merit of understanding the philosophical underpinnings of the different research traditions, broadly referred to as positivism and post-positivism. Opponents of positivism assert that the world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individual being investigated. The frame of reference for the post-positivist researcher is the individual's interpretation of the world, that is, the direct experience of the person.

The post-positivists were motivated by their promotion of a broader, creative and individual view of human nature and by their need to see a change in the power balance between the researcher and the participants. The qualitative interpretative approach developed as a reaction to the detached, objective approach of empirical inquiry. Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p.14) maintained that the complexity of the world could be better explained by "the phenomenological approach" because of the philosophical underpinnings and perceptions which 'see' the world as interconnected and multi-layered. For that reason the interpretative approach appealed to this researcher who aimed "to account for human and social behaviour," and set out to understand individuals' 'interpretation of the world around them,' (Cohen et al., 2007 p22). The research sought to answer the question of how a school system, responded to emerging diversity in Ireland through its supports, management, pedagogy policy and practice,. In seeking answers to the prima-facie research question, the researcher eschewed the objectivist, mechanistic and reductionist, scientific stance of the quantitative method and chose the subjectivist, phenomenological, qualitative approach which matched

his philosophical assumptions. Mindful of the fact that "paradigm wars are never over" (Sugrue 2009, p.11), the researcher was conscious that subjectivism is not without shortcomings. As there are many versions of reality and each interpretation of reality is considered as good as the next one, criticisms of the subjectivist approach have been made on the grounds of relativism.

Preference for the qualitative paradigm was also evident in previous research projects completed by this researcher. While studying for a Diploma in Education Management he carried out observation studies. For his Masters degree, on early school leaving, he carried out interviews with staff and students. Small scale qualitative studies (interviews with personnel in positions of leadership; observation studies), were carried out as part of this doctoral programme. In choosing a predominantly qualitative model the researcher enabled himself to seek words and behaviours in a contextual field of information, which in this case was the school, where the students were participants rather than respondents.

A minor part of the research was conducted by questionnaire which resulted in the integration of the traditional approaches with qualitative methods occurred. This approach is referred to as mixed methods and will be discussed briefly in the next section.

3.3 Mixed methods

Mason (1996, p.5) asserts that the multi method strategy is not "technically impossible. The aggregation of data from multiple sources and from multiple perspectives ensures triangulation and validity. The use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies helps with the triangulation of results (Patton 1990). The researcher decided to use mixed methods in this study for the validation of findings through internal cross-checking. The use of questionnaire to teachers (3.7.2) and document/database analysis (3.9 and 3.10) gives a mixed method element to the investigation albeit to a minor degree. The methods of one to one interviews with management and internal support personnel, interviews with external personnel, student focus group discussion result in a predominantly qualitative study. Compared to monomethod research, gaining insights into "various points of view and ways of knowing" (Maykut and Morehouse 1994, p.146), frequently results in superior research Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004).

The researcher examined both the in-school and out-of-school supports for newcomer students in one second-level school. He obtained data from a broad range of internal and

external sources-teachers, guidance counsellors, learning support personnel, newcomer students as well as personnel from governmental and non-governmental organisations. The research instruments were selected as a means of gauging students' academic and social integration in the secondary school, and to elicit information on supports, policy and practice at school and national level. The range of methods used were successfully integrated into a case study and broadened out the toolkit of approaches for answering the research question.

3.4 Case Study

A notable characteristic of the case study is its proximity to 'the studied reality,' (Flyvbjerg 2004, p.392) and because of "closeness to real-life situations," case study research is especially suited to produce concrete context-dependent knowledge. Selected for its suitability in the investigation of "a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context," Yin (1984, p.23). Robson (2002); Stake (2006) discussed the benefits of the case study method for the study of contemporary phenomena. This researcher wished to capture the living experiences of one particular group of students in "the complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships" (Cohen et al. 2007, p.253). He set out to examine the "real life context" of the second level newcomer student through a range of perspectives.

The growth in diversity in Irish schools is contemporary and is 'bounded' in a particular setting (a second level school), in space and in time (circa two years). One can develop "an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes," (Denscombe 1998, p.32), which can be woven into a body of explanation which builds theory.

Capturing the voice of the young immigrant student as they navigate life in a second level school was an important part of the investigation. The Case Study methodology facilitated the researcher "to take a particular case and come to know it well," (Stake 1995, p.8). He also wanted to mine the knowledge of those who worked closely with the students - the teachers, support personnel and school management, engaging directly with the "experience and understanding" (Cohen et al. 2007, p.22) of selected participants.

A range of questions posed in the questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion focussed on the broad concept of the student educational experience and examined the needs of the students and the extent and impact of student academic and social supports. The level of commitment to supporting newcomer students' educational integration and progression

was interrogated through questioning via interviews, focus groups and to a lesser extent questionnaire.

3.5 Interviews

Qualitative research interviews are now increasingly employed as a method in their own right, with an expanding methodological literature on how to carry out interview research. The research interview, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.2) "is based on the conversation of daily life and is a professional conversation." They state that "knowledge is constructed" in the dynamic of the "inter-view," in the "inter-action" between the interviewer and the interviewee. They define an interview as "an *inter-view,* an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest."

3.5.1 Interviews with internal support personnel

The researcher decided to initiate the inquiry by conducting interviews with personnel who were directly involved with newcomer students in a distinct supportive capacity. The position of Integration Officer (IO), was created by the school principal who in 2007, selected a teacher in a middle management position (assistant principal) to carry out the duties. At the time of the interview the IO had been in place for two years. The author selected the IO because the role involved the management of the integration of newcomer students in the school. The role of SCP coordinator, who was also selected for the pilot questionnaire is explained in 3.10.1.

The interviews with the school IO (Appendix 2) and with the SCP coordinators (Appendices 1 &3) were "minimally structured" (Mertens 1998, p.132), as the researcher was guided by a few key questions, originating from his own personal knowledge, the literature, discussion with his supervisor, findings from the pilot questionnaires and unstructured discussions with EAL and subject teachers.

Seale et al. (2004, p.25) describe interviewing at its most basic as "asking questions and following up on various things that interviewees raise and allowing them to talk." The advantage of face to face interviews is that interviewees will respond to the researcher in an entirely different way from the way that they react to questionnaires.

You will be able to watch and listen for nuances of their behaviour which will give you important clues about how they feel about a topic (Thomas 2009 p.160).

King (1994 cited in Cassel and Symon 1994, p.14) states that the qualitative research interview is "the most widely used qualitative method in organizational research" and asserted that the goal of the qualitative research interview is to understand the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee.

Prior to the interviews with the school IO and the SCP personnel, the researcher conducted unstructured discussions with both. These afforded the researcher an opportunity to gain insight of the individuals' supportive role in the academic and social integration of children of migrants as well as providing information on their collaborative work role with school management, guidance counsellors and EAL teachers. Mertens (1998, p.321) describes unstructured discussions "as opportunities to share the purpose, discuss confidentiality issues, and get assurance that the person does want to participate." The researcher found that the unstructured discussions prior to interview helped him in the building up of rapport with the interviewees while getting a sense of the topic. As the investigation progressed the researcher did not conduct unstructured discussion prior to interview.

3.5.2 External Interviews - the adult migrant perspective

Lentin (2011) asks a very important question about our right as researchers and academics "to speak about and for migrants."

> We must ask again and again: who speaks for whom, and who is entitled to speak for migrants? (p3 Metro Eireann 15-30 April)

By conducting interviews with adults from a migrant background and focus group discussions with children of migrants, (Section 3.8.8), the researcher aspired to present "the migrant voice" to counterbalance "the official voice." The "official voice" in this case being the perceptions, views and opinions of the educators and support personnel who participated in this study.

He was interested in interviewing adults from a migrant background who were involved with migrant issues as part of their daily and professional lives. The professional backgrounds of the three selected individuals are outlined in the Appendices section prior to the content of each interview. The three participants are:

1. The Editor of *Metro Eireann* , Ireland's multicultural newspaper who was an Intercultural Ambassador in 2008 (Appendix 13)
2. The former Policy Advisor to the Minister of Integration (Appendix 14)
3. The Integration Manager of the Immigration Council of Ireland (ICI) (Appendix 21)

3.5.3 Interview with School Principal

The school principal was selected for interview in order to acquire data from the perspective of an official voice who holds an overview of the education of newcomers in the case study school. The face to face interview was conducted towards the end of the fieldwork (see Figure 4.2) subsequent to the questionnaire to staff and the support personnel interviews.

The principal was aware that this study was in progress over two years in his school, granted permission for and was supportive of the inquiry. The researcher had already interviewed him as part of an assignment for a leadership module which he completed as part of this doctoral programme.

The researcher designed the interview with seven predetermined questions based on the main themes of the findings from the staff questionnaire, the support personnel interviews and from two focus group discussions. The predetermined questions focussed on attendance patterns, integration in general, Transition Year uptake, bullying and racism, interventions/supports for newcomers, academic achievement and parent school engagement (Appendix 15).

Despite the use of predetermined questions, the researcher did not limit himself to the format of a structured interview as he wanted the informant to have scope to discuss any issue when answering the set questions. Question 2, *What are your views on the integration of newcomer students, generally?* was set with a broad ambit which presented the interviewer with opportunities to follow up points as he saw fit. The informant's answer to question 2 led to three follow up questions which were not predetermined and two mirroring comments which garnered additional data. (2c and 2e Appendix 15)

Similarly when the informant answered question 4 on bullying he led the interviewer to ask two further questions, which were not pre specified but gleaned specific data. These instances of the gathering of valuable data can happen in a semi-structured interview situation and could not happen if the interview was structured. In these instances the informant discusses

the issues or a facet of a particular issue which needs to be discussed, resulting in data which is enriched.

3.6 Focus groups the migrant student voice.

According to Mertens (1998, p.174) the focus group process is designed to elicit more of the participants' points of view (than would be evidenced in more researcher-dominated interviewing)'

Thomas (2009, p.82) describes the data generated from focus groups as "rich information from small groups of people." With the aim of attaining the migrant student perspective, data was collected directly from the newcomer students by the focus group method. The groups consisted of four or five students, (see figure 3. 1), selected on the basis of sharing "the same theoretically relevant characteristic" (Seale et al. 2007, p.69), that is first generation children of migrants, for whom English is a Second or Additional language, negotiating the second level education system in Ireland.

Over a four month period in 2011 (Table 4.2), data was collected from the student participants through four focus groups (see figure 3.1). Eighteen students in total participated in the discussions.

Focus Group	1	2	3	4
Year group	3rd	3rd	6th	6th
Students	5	4	5	4

Table 3.1 Focus Group

The researcher's professional contact with 3rd years consisted of two class periods only, that year, for presentations regarding Aptitude Tests and Senior Cycle Subject Choice and he met four of them for one to one feedback on their Aptitude Test results and to deal with their queries about subject choice. The other five obtained Senior Cycle guidance options from other guidance counsellors in the school. All newcomer third year students were informed about the research, nine of whom volunteered to participate. Letters of permission were signed by students and parents prior to commencement of data collection.

In the case of 6th year group the author had weekly class contact with two of the participants and prior to the data gathering had met both on a one to one basis for guidance counselling. The remaining seven did not have any contact with the author prior to the research, as they

were assigned to other guidance counsellors in the school. The author was satisfied that objectivity was achieved because of the appropriate degree of distance from the subjects of the research.

All focus group participants were first generation immigrants who spoke English as a second or as another language. He selected students who were in a State Exam year, either Junior Certificate (3rd year) or Leaving Certificate (6th year). Each recruited group was "defined in relation to the particular conceptual framework of the study" MacNaghten and Myers (cited in Seale et al. 2007, p.68) which was academic integration and social integration. The groups represented a range of nationalities from Eastern and Central Europe, Middle East, South America and Asia and were in the 15-18 age group.

In the focus group setting, the process of interaction between participants, can help people to explore and clarify their views (Kitzinger 1995, p.299). The group dynamic which takes place in focus group discussions may stimulate thoughts and comments in a way which does not occur in face to face interviews. The researcher aimed to facilitate an interchange of ideas, viewpoints and perceptions. He initiated discussion with a question and aimed "to let the group take the lead," Thomas (2009, p.170). He facilitated the discussion because this is what makes focus groups different from interviews. The participants "interact with each other rather than with the interviewer," Kitzinger (1995, p.300).

The focus group format is more suited to students with literacy difficulties as they may have difficulties comprehending the questionnaire format. Non literate participants will be encouraged to speak in such a setting (Krueger 1998; Robson 2002). The focus group setting may be more suitable for a student who might be 'intimidated by the formality and isolation of a one to one interview,' Kitzinger (1995, p.300). This researcher observed that the quieter type of student was more talkative midst the chat, banter and humour which occurred during the discussion. He also observed that an Asian girl who was very quiet in the classroom setting was more forthcoming in the focus group discussion.

That the focus group method 'will yield insights' which would not be available in the one to one interview is espoused by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.376).

3.7 Questionnaires

The advantages of questionnaires in small scale research are well documented, (Fink, 1995; Kane, 1985; Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003). The researcher must counterbalance the advantages of questionnaires as data collecting instruments, against the disadvantages. The attractions, according to Cohen et al. (2007, p.317) are that they can be administered without the presence of the researcher and they provide structured data. Robson (2002, p233), states that the "…relatively simple and straightforward approach to the study of attitudes, values, beliefs and motives," is an advantage.

While the drawbacks are that piloting takes time to refine the instrument (Cohen et al. 2007) and the data can be affected by characteristics of the respondents- "memory; knowledge; experience; motivation and personality" (Robson 2002, p.233). The researcher needs to be aware of what Robson (2002) identifies as "social responsibility response bias – people responding in a way that shows them in a favourable light."

3.7.1 Pilot questionnaire

A semi-structured questionnaire is a series of questions, statements or items presented to the respondents who are asked to comment on them in a way that they think fit (Cohen et al. 2007). For the pilot study the researcher used two semi-structured questionnaires which were made up of statements and open ended questions enabling respondents to comment on the item. Pilot questionnaires were distributed at the commencement of the inquiry in order to:

- find the emergent issues affecting the education of the children of migrants
- to use the findings as a foundation for the construction of questions the main part of the inquiry.

Two start up drafts (Appendices 4 and 6), were designed, for in-school and out-of-school personnel respectively and as a result of discussion with the doctoral supervisor, Questions 6 and 7 of each draft, were amended (Appendices 5 and 7)

The first pilot questionnaire (Appendix 5) was distributed to five staff members:

- two guidance counsellors
- two EAL teachers
- one learning support/resource teacher who taught EAL.

Learning support/resource teachers are appointed to provide support to students with learning difficulties and students who have special educational needs. http://www.education.ie

The rationale for selection of the aforementioned five personnel was based on their daily contact with newcomer students. EAL teachers observe the newcomers in classroom settings. They teach the newcomers who are most in need of language support and monitor their language development and get to know them on an individual basis as well as observing their social interactions.

Guidance counsellors were selected for the pilot study because of their frontline engagement with students at transitional times in their education and their role as vocational and educational counsellors at group and at individual level.

EAL teachers were deemed as suitable sources of data collection for the following reasons:

- classroom contact with newcomer students particularly with students who are most in need of language support
- monitoring of students' language development as well as their observation of the students' social interaction in the classroom

The resource/learning support teacher was chosen for the pilot research because of involvement in

- setting up EAL teaching in the school in 2003
- coordination of the EAL programme
- was an EAL teacher up to 2009
- contact with children of migrants as a resource teacher

The pilot questionnaire (Appendix 7) was intended for School Completion Programme (SCP) personnel. The philosophy underpinning the programme is outlined in 1.3.3. SCP tackles educational disadvantage, defined in the Education Act (1998) as:

> …the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools.

The SCP coordinator was based in the case study school, since 2001, and with a team of project workers was involved in initiatives with the second level school and with all the

feeder primary schools in the catchment area. At the time of interview interventions included learning support, counselling/mentoring, attendance monitoring, breakfast clubs, lunchtime clubs, afterschool clubs, holiday provision, family visitation, social and personal programmes along with sports and cultural programmes. EAL learners are among the target groups for SCP. The programme is governed by a local management committee (LMC) comprising:

- Principals of all participating schools in the programme in the area,
- Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher,
- Visiting teacher for the travellers (VTT), education welfare officer (EWO)
- Representatives from relevant statutory and non statutory agencies (e.g. HSE and Vincent de Paul)
- Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO)
- Parents representatives from all participating schools in the area and a representative from the local partnership.
- Local SCP Coordinator

3.7.2 Questionnaire to all staff

The researcher designed the questionnaire (Appendix 10) based on the findings from the pilot questionnaire and the pilot interviews. The emergent issues were attendance patterns, participation in extra- curricular activities, uptake Transition Year, EAL/EFL provision and school-parent engagement. Respondents were requested to rate a list of statements pertaining to these issues. To enable the researcher examine the responsibility taken by the school to ensure that newcomers were encouraged to get the most out of their school experiences, respondents were also asked to rate the supports for the students in relation to each emergent issue. The purpose of question 1 was to seek out the viewpoints of teachers in relation to the academic and social development of newcomer students.

Attendance patterns of newcomers emerged as an issue during the pilot stage of the study and questions 2 and 3 were designed around the different facets of attendance. In question 2, staff members were asked to rate the statement *"The pattern of attendance among newcomer students in the school is satisfactory."* Respondents who *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* to the statement were asked, in question 3, to rate the following characteristics of the attendance patterns which emerged as specific issues in the pilot study – *poor punctuality,*

early departure, unauthorised absence from some classes, long period of unexplained absences, and truancy (mitching).

The questionnaire was submitted to DCU Research Ethics Committee as part of the application for approval of a project involving human participants. The response from the university ethical approval committee, read as follows:

With regard to Question 2, the criteria of 'satisfactory' appears very subjective and open to different interpretations. The follow-up question (Q3) only investigates further a negative response to Q2 which seems to lend a negative frame to this aspect of the study.

Questions 2 and 3 were amended, based on the National Welfare Education Board (NEWB) criteria (Appendix 11). The criteria used for poor attendance is absences of 20 days or over, out of a school year of 167 days.

Respondents were asked to rate the attendance patterns of newcomer students from the options *very good, good, don't know, poor* and *very poor.* (Question 2)

The amended version of Question 3 was designed so that respondents could rate <u>four</u> different aspects of attendance patterns, namely, *punctuality, explanatory notes for absences from school for full day,*

Explanatory notes for absences from school for part of the day and explanatory notes for long periods of absences (1 week or over)

The purpose of question 4 was to ascertain what supports were in place in the school, in order to address the issues associated with attendance patterns. The item on supports was in keeping with the researchers wish to investigate the level of support for newcomers in relation to attendance.

The author designed question 5 in order to ascertain the opinions of the staff on three emergent issues- *participation in extra- curricular activities, participation in Transition Year* and *school-parent engagement* in addition to rating each item from a menu of *very good, good, average, poor and very poor.*

In addition, respondents were asked to rate the supports in place in the school for each item and were afforded the space to comment on each situation.

Question 6 sought to uncover the opinions of the staff on EAL/EFL classes in the school and respondents were asked to rate the adequacy of the provision as a support for newcomer students (with the same rating values as in question 5)

The final draft of the questionnaire to staff members (Appendix 11) was constructed as a series of statements accompanied by options of rating on a sliding scale along with an option for additional commentary on the statement. Question 7 afforded the respondents additional opportunity for comments on issues which they could not address in the previous six questions and the choice of making recommendations was opened to them.

Management, teaching staff and Special Needs Assistants (SNA's) in the school were surveyed. The principal and deputy principals were surveyed because of their daily managerial contact with students subject teachers were surveyed because of their pedagogical role and/or special duties and middle management positions. SNA's were surveyed based on a conjecture by the researcher that due to their daily presence in the classroom their contributions might contribute to the data.

Questionnaires were distributed to 118 teaching staff and 10 SNA's. 5 staff members who were on maternity/parental leave and on career break were not surveyed.

A three-page questionnaire (Appendix 11) was placed in the staff members individual post boxes in the staffroom with a cover letter explaining the nature and purpose of the research and assuring anonymity (Appendix 9).

3.8 Database (ePortal) research

Facility e-Portal is a gateway that allows authorised personnel to access data about students enrolled in the school. Secure, password-protected entry ensures that background information (name, address, date of birth etc.), examination results and attendance records of students are accessible to authorised staff members. As a member of the academic staff in the school, password-protected entry enabled the researcher to access data. Analysis of data from the pilot study indicated that the attendance patterns of newcomer students emerged as an issue. This finding guided the researcher to undertake an examination of newcomer students' attendance records on the school database (e-portal). Permission was obtained from the school principal to access the attendance patterns of the children of migrants both for research purposes and as a matter of interest to the school. In his role as a staff member in the

school the researcher had insider privilege. The ethical implications of insider as researcher will be discussed in Section 3.12.

The data provided the researcher with the numbers of days missed and whether the absences were unexplained or otherwise. As a result of findings from the interviews and questionnaires, he was particularly interested in the "unexplained" category and would delve further into this issue as the inquiry progressed.

3.9 Document analysis

The National Education Welfare Board NEWB was established under The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 with an aim to promote and improve school attendance rates for children at primary and post-primary level education. The NEWB is the statutory agency responsible for implementing the provisions of the Act and is responsible for ensuring that every child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives an appropriate education (Section 10). Since the commencement of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, schools are obliged to report persistent absenteeism when a student is absent for twenty days or over, without adequate explanation. In order to promote regular school attendance and to reduce absenteeism and early school leaving, the NEWB appointed Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) who are assigned to different regions of the country. With the school principal's permission he perused the documents in order to find out if any newcomer students' names were included under the NEWB twenty days rule.

3.10 The ethical implications of insider research:

The researcher mentioned his position as insider researcher in 1.3.1 but here will discuss the implications in greater detail, mindful of the epistemological implications of carrying out fieldwork in one's own workplace. Mercer (2007, p.8) refers to the "pros and cons of insiderness" as "the double edged sword." Researching from this position generates significant advantages such as familiarity with the setting, ease of access to participants and opportunities to "get down a lot deeper, quicker" (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight 2006, p.47). During the process of conducting insider research, there is a practical advantage of saving time by not having to travel to the research site. Conducting insider research does not involve travelling a distance to a site and therefore is less time consuming. A degree of flexibility exists around the timing of arrangements for questionnaire data gathering and arrangement of interview times. An understanding of the setting and a knowledge of the

context are advantages for the insider researcher (Mercer 2007, p11). Mercer cites Hannabus (2000, p.103) who opines that "insider researchers are familiar with the organisational culture, the routines and the scripts of the workplaces."

Hodkinson (2005, p131/132) advises caution and reflexivity on the part of the researcher in relation to what he terms as "insider" experience and "ethnographic interpretation and understanding," while Robson (2002, p.535) advises the would-be researcher to guard against 'preconceptions about issues and/or solutions.'

The author of this study was cautious about the impact which his assumptions as an insider might have on his role as researcher. As a guidance counsellor in the school, he was aware that, prior to the research, he carried his own perspectives on issues relating to newcomer students. In order to guard against the imposition of his assumptions on the investigation, he decided to extract data from multiple sources - newcomer students, school database, documents, teachers, school management and support staff. The methods selected for data collection – teacher questionnaires, one to one interviews with management and support personnel, student focus group discussion and document/database analysis, ensured triangulation. Triangulation strengthens the evidential base because the research subjects are probed from different angles and this gives rich data and is a safeguard against researcher-insider bias. The multi-method approach enables the researcher to get a better fix on "the richness and complexity of human behaviour" (Cohen et al. 2007, p.141)

The author was satisfied that he was able to maintain the appropriate distance between researcher and participants, in order to carry out the fieldwork in a credible and ethical manner. For the pilot study he carried out one to one interviews with school management, support staff and one EAL teacher along while collecting background information from the school's e-portal database. Although he worked in the same organisation, he did not work closely on a daily basis, with any of the interviewees.   Prior to beginning the pilot study he was on career break from the school for two years, 2007-2009.   During that time, the landscape had shifted as the population of newcomer students increased,   supports for students had expanded with provision of additional EFL (Circular 0053/2007, Chapter 1). Three of the teachers were new to the school. The IO was appointed in 2007 and prior to the interview the author was unaware of the specifics of the post. At the pilot stage, carried out in 2009/2010, the author approached colleagues, involved with supports for newcomer students,

with a request to participate in the research. One colleague was uncomfortable with the request for a short interview but agreed to answer a questionnaire which he did not return. It is difficult to ascertain if the reluctance of that one colleague to participate was due to the insider status of the author/researcher.

During the school year 2010/11 data was collected from the student participants by setting up four focus groups. The author was satisfied that an appropriate professional distance existed between himself and the student participants to ensure that the research could be carried out in an objective manner.

During the research process, the insider/researcher needs to be particularly conscious of power difference between researcher and participants Clonan (2010, p.10) and Mercer (2007, p.6). An issue of ethical concern for the researcher in this study was that the investigation involved a dependent population which required him to be mindful of how his personality and prejudices as an insider/researcher impacted on the young participants and on the interpretation of the information gathered.

From the outset, he followed procedures to ensure that the research was conducted in a manner which was respectful of and empowering towards the students. He explained the nature of the research study and clarified that his role of researcher was distinct from his role as guidance counsellor. He stressed that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw from the process at any time and that confidentiality and anonymity would be strictly adhered to.

Throughout the process, he was sensitive to the migrant status of the students and their families. Communicating clearly and honestly with the participants and the organisation is a significant component of conducting ethical research (Matthews 2001; Hill 2005). He invited the students to participate and emphasised that their participation was voluntary. He gave an explanatory outline to them explaining the different stages, reassuring them of anonymity because informant identity would be protected by the use of different names and by the modification of specific background details (Appendix 16). The researcher emphasised that they would not have to answer any questions which they felt were intrusive in any way and he requested that they explain this to parents/guardians. The parents/guardians were given the same information as the students and were requested to sign a consent slip if they were satisfied with their child's participation (Appendix 16).

The researcher was satisfied that the aims and objectives of the research were communicated clearly to all participants as submitted in the Plain Language Statement (PLS) a requirement of the Ethical Approval Application to Dublin City University Ethical Committee.

I want to know how you are getting on in secondary school with your studies, with homework and in your school life generally.   I will ask you about your involvement in extra-curricular activities like sport and music I will also ask you about your involvement in lunchtime and after school activities. *(excerpt from Plain Language Statement)*

Subsequent to reading the PLS, potential participants were invited to fill out an Informed Consent Form (fig. 3.2)

Have you read or had read to you the plain language statement? Yes/ No

Do you understand the information provided?
Yes/ No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?

Yes/ No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?   Yes/No

Table 3.2.   Extract from Informed Consent Form

The application by the researcher, for approval of a project involving human participants was reviewed and certified as acceptable by Dublin City University (DCU) Research Ethics Committee (REC).

Following ethical guidelines while conducting the research in a transparent manner is an important component of ethical decision-making (Schuklenk 2005). The focus group method was selected not only to elicit data from newcomer students but also to mitigate the power

balance between the author as insider-researcher and the student. The students were empowered by the group dynamic and an awareness of this was a significant factor in his selection of the focus group method. His aim was to facilitate the group discussion rather than to lead as a researcher would do in an interview. He took the utmost care in the hearing and interpretation of the variety of voices while recognising and respecting difference (Greene and Hogan 2005).

The research was conducted in an empathic manner, in a safe environment. The establishment of rapport with the informants and the adoption of vigilance towards what are called, the 'emotional geographies' of interview interactions and ambiguities associated with particular issues and experiences (Anderson and Smith 2001;). The researcher facilitated the participants in the free expression of ideas, opinions and perspectives and their contributions produced rich data.

A qualitative approach to the research allowed for the use of a broad toolkit of methods which reflected the principle that there are multiple perspectives of reality. He wished to view the research problem through a subjectivist lens and he believed that knowledge could be co- constructed and that the subjects of the research were participants in the generation of new knowledge.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter developed the discussion, initiated in the previous chapters, on purpose of the research, theoretical framework and research question. A discussion on the research question was incorporated in order to illuminate further the purpose of the research. A discussion on ontology, epistemology, methodology, paradigms and their philosophical underpinnings followed.

The rationale for the selection of the methods of data collection was outlined -the interview, focus group discussion, questionnaire, database study and document analysis. A pilot study carried out in the school informed the research on the emergent issues and in order to address the research question on supports he needed to find out more the immediate needs of the students' integration and he achieved this by interviewing internal support personnel and teachers who worked closely with the children of migrants. External interviews were carried out in order to get an overview of the research problem and to help with generalizability.

The focus group discussions with children of migrants, afforded a voice to the students. The suitability of the case study methodology for this study was included in the discourse. Contextualising the researcher as insider made up the substance of the final section of the chapter. The next chapter will feature the presentation of the data generated by the research process.

Chapter 4
Presentation of Data

4.0 Introduction

This chapter contains eight sections. An outline of the research process accompanied by the timeframe indicating the dates, the instruments and the personnel involved at each stage of the fieldwork (4.1).

Section 4.2 will concentrate on what the researcher calls the *start-up* interview which was carried out as a "feeler" into the topic in the early exploratory stage of the inquiry and at the stage when the possibility of a comparative study was being considered.

The research process involved in the pilot study will be outlined in Section 4.3. Findings from the pilot study will be presented, as they influenced the construction of the research instruments and are included in the main doctoral study. The background to two internal interviewees selected for the pilot will be presented. Links between the roles of the informants and the findings with the research question will be presented.

In order to illustrate the link between the pilot study and the main questionnaire to staff, the themes from the pilot questionnaire exercises will be presented (4.4). In order to demonstrate how the findings from the completed questionnaire will be presented, the findings from one item out of the teaching staff questionnaire will be presented. Staff Questionnaire themes will be presented in table format.

Section 4.5 will contain a presentation of the data from two internal interviewees one of whom was a teacher who carried out the role of attendance officer in the school, as part of her middle management post. The principal of the school used in this study was the other interviewee.

While concentrating the inquiry on one school, the researcher wanted to simultaneously investigate the needs interventions at national level and acquire data on available supports in other schools and communities. He selected three external interviewees. The three key informants who were selected for interview were:

- The editor of a multicultural newspaper, *Metro Eireann*

- A former Policy Advisor to the Minister for Integration
- The Integration Manager and a research intern from the Immigrant Council of Ireland

The migrant background of the external informants, and their professional roles in migrant related advocacy, which underpins the rationale for their selection, will be outlined in section 4.6.

The research which was triangulated by the use of focus groups, will incorporate the perceptions of migrant students, in section 4.7. The themes concentrated on in the focus groups were influenced by the emergent issues from the pilot study and from the interviews with the external informants.

The final stage in the chapter (4.8), will present the data analytical strategy by describing the eight phases in the interrogation, analysis and synthesis of data and how the use of the qualitative data analysis software NVivo contributes to the process. This section will include the presentation of some key findings from the interviews, the questionnaires and from the focus groups.

4.1 The Research Strategy

The eight stages in the research process and presentation of data is outlined in Table 4.1

Stage One	Timeframe Research Instrument Research Personnel
Stage Two	The start-up Interview
Stage Three	Pilot Study
Stage Four	Questionnaires
Stage Five	Internal Interviewees
Stage Six	External Interviewees
Stage Seven	Focus Group participants
Stage Eight	Data Analysis

Table 4.1 Chapter Stages

The fieldwork for this investigative inquiry carried out over a two year period from May 2009 to July 2011. The following chart shows the timeframe for the research, the research instrument and the research personnel involved at each stage of the inquiry.

4.1.1 Chronology of the research process

Date	Research Instrument	Research Sample
May 2009	Interview	SCP coordinator A
September 2009	Interview	Integration Officer
September 2009	Interview	SCP coordinator B
October 2009	Pilot Questionnaire	Guidance Counsellors (2)
		EAL Teachers (2)
		Learning Support/EAL teacher (1)
November 2009	Unstructured Interview	Guidance Counsellor (1)
		EAL Teacher (1)
		Learning Support/EAL teacher (1)
September 2010	Interview	Attendance Officer
November 2010	Questionnaire	All Teaching Staff
February 2011	Interview	Intercultural Ambassador/Editor (multicultural newspaper)
April 2011	Interview	Policy Advisor to Minister for Integration
Feb. - June 2011	Focus Groups (4)	Junior Cycle students (2 groups)
		Senior Cycle students (2 groups)
June 2011	Interview	School Principal
July 2011	Interview	CEO Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI)
	Interview	Research Intern (ICI)

Table 4.2 Chronology of the research process

4.2 The Start-up Interview

The researcher decided to begin the inquiry by investigating the situation in relation to the education of children of migrants at second level schools in Ireland. He decided to interview an SCP coordinator because children of migrants and their families are within the target group for the broad range of SCP supports/interventions which address persistent absenteeism and school participation and retention. He selected an SCP Coordinator who was based in an inner city area which had experienced an increase in immigration over the previous years. At this orientation stage the researcher was considering a comparative study on the education of children of migrants between an urban and a rural school.

Findings from this start up interview were

- SCP provided supports for migrant children and their parents
- SCP was linked with a School-Cultural Mediation programme which financed interpreters at parent-teacher meetings.
- Translation of school documents, reports and assessments formed part of the supports available to immigrant families.

The findings from this interview provided the researcher with insights into emergent challenging issues experienced by immigrant children and the interventions and supports which were set up as a response to these challenges.

The main challenging issues were linked to the acquisition of English language both for immigrant children and their parents. The findings from the start up interview were not included in the pilot findings because the pilot study concentrated on the one school selected for this study.

The findings from the start-up interview were incorporated in the main study because of:

- The relevance of the ideas, perceptions, opinions and expertise of the SCP Coordinator on his role and the role of project workers supporting migrant families and children in education
- The commonality of a number of issues relating to interventions and supports for children of migrants

In the next section the pilot study data will be presented.

4.3 Pilot study

A short pilot questionnaire was distributed to two guidance counsellors, to one EAL teacher and to one Learning Support /former EAL teacher. Emergent issues from the pilot questionnaire were further investigated with one Guidance Counsellor, one EAL and one Learning Support/former EAL teacher in the form of unstructured interviews.

EAL provision was exclusively aimed at supporting the education of children of migrants in English language acquisition and semi structured interviews were conducted with the school Integration Officer (IO) and the School Completion Programme (SCP) Coordinator for the school catchment area.

The position of IO, was established for two years in the school in order to support the education of migrant students. The IO became the team leader of the EAL teachers. Developing and strengthening school-home links with the newcomer families was also part of the IO's remit. Their overarching responsibility was to support the academic and social engagement of the migrant students and their families.

Integration Officer (IO)	academic integration social integration
EAL teachers	academic integration social integration

Table 4.3 Links between roles and research question

The general themes which emerged from the pilot study were issues in relation to social and academic integration, friendship patterns, involvement in extra-curricular activities such as sport, racism, school-parent links and attendance patterns.

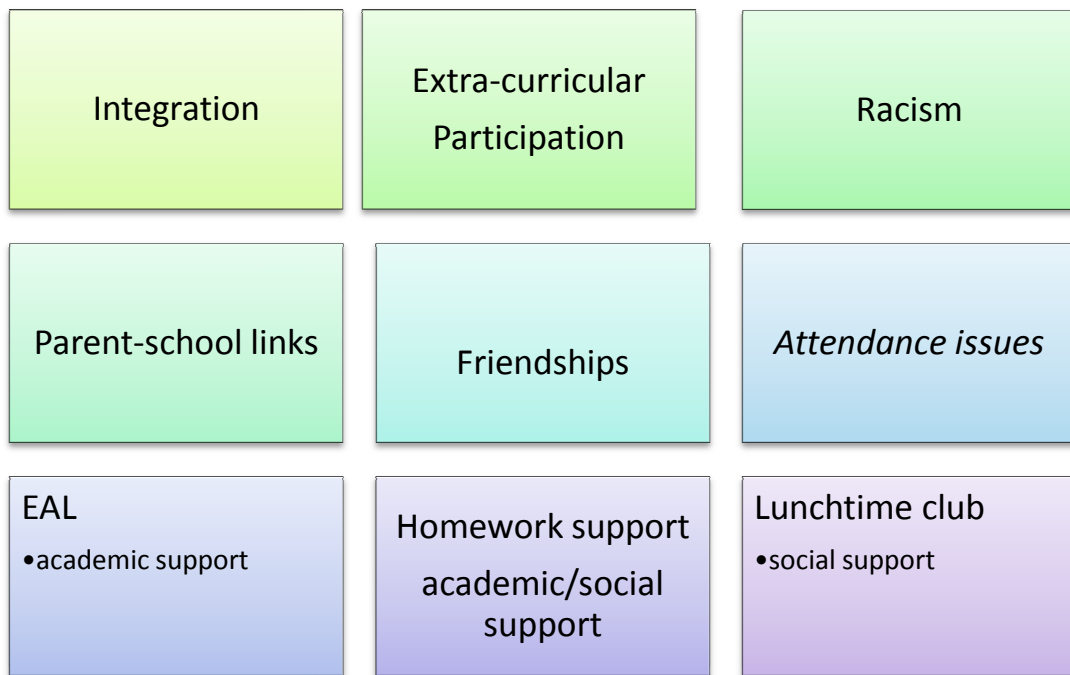| Integration	Extra-curricular Participation	Racism
Parent-school links	Friendships	*Attendance issues*
EAL •academic support	Homework support academic/social support	Lunchtime club •social support

Fig. 4.4 Themes from Pilot Study

Findings from the pilot study were written up and subsequently included in the main doctoral study findings. The general themes which emerged *(Figure 4.4)* provided a stimulus for the researcher to broaden the research sample. He selected two more internal interviewees, the school attendance officer (AO) and the school Principal. The following section will deal with the background and rationale for conducting interviews with the school AO and the school Principal.

4.4 Questionnaire to all teaching staff

The findings from the pilot questionnaire were divided into emergent positive issues and emergent challenging issues. The emergent positive issues identified by the teaching staff, were:

- The creation of the Integration Officer (IO) post in 2007
- Provision of English as another language (EAL) classes since 2004
- Support provision by school management structure, the guidance counselling system and the school completion programme (SCP)
- The availability of sport and its benefits for social integration
- The support structures for all students - tutor/year head system, including children of migrants

- DES provision of own language exam paper for a wide range of modern languages and use of dictionary in state exam.
- The emergent challenging issues identified from pilot study findings were:
- The inadequacy of two years of EAL provision for newly arrived students and the 2009 cap of two teachers per school (DES directive)
- Socio-economic disadvantage prohibits full participation in school extracurricular activities and programmes.
- Tendency on the part of students to become dependent on the EAL class group for socialisation reducing opportunities to improve English and to integrate.
- The negative impact of low level of parent-school contact/attendance at parent teacher meetings and family breakdown.
- The negative impact of peer group animosities on learning and on socialisation
- The negative implications of intra-familial and intra-cultural conflict on social and academic integration
- The emergent positive and emergent negative findings from the pilot study informed the construction of the questionnaire. The themes resulting from the findings of the staff questionnaire are presented in the following table (4.5).

Supports	Attendance patterns	Extra-curricular
Transition Year (TY)	School-parent engagement	EFL/EAL provision

Table 4.5 Staff Questionnaire themes

The findings from the staff questionnaires will be presented with findings from other sources, under different themes in Chapter 5. The next section will outline the background to two additional internal interviews who were interviewed as part of the main study in 2010 (Attendance Officer) and 2011(School Principal) (Tables 4.1 and 4.6).

4.5 Internal interviewees

Analysis of data from the pilot study indicated that the attendance patterns of newcomer students emerged as an issue of concern. The researcher interviewed the school AO, a teacher in a middle management position, who monitored attendance as part of her post. The researcher asked about patterns of attendance and interrogated the possible reasons for unexplained absences, truancy and mitching. Mitching in this context means that the student is marked present for the school day but chooses to avoid one or more classes during that day. The issues of the links between parental engagement and school, proficiency in English and attendance patterns were also interrogated.

The school principal was selected for interview in order to acquire data from the overall perspective of management. The face to face interview was conducted subsequent to the questionnaire to staff and the support personnel interviews. The researcher designed the interview with seven predetermined questions based on the main themes of the findings from the pilot interviews (IO, SCP), the pilot questionnaire, the staff questionnaire, (all teaching staff) and from two focus group discussions (students). The predetermined questions focussed on attendance patterns, integration issues, Transition Year uptake, bullying and racism, interventions/supports for children of migrants, academic achievement and parent school engagement.

The opinions, attitudes and perceptions of adult Irish educational professionals, were embodied in the data collected from the pilot interviews with the IO and SCP coordinator and the post-pilot interviews with the school AO and the school Principal. The researcher bestows the appellation of *internal interviewees* on this group because they are based in the selected school. The appellation of *external interviewees* refers to the personnel who were based outside the school, three of whom are from a migrant background. (Table 4.6)

Internal Interviewees	External Interviewees
S CP Co-ordinator B *(Appendix 3)*	SCP Coordinator A *(Appendix 1)*
Integration Officer *(Appendix 2)*	Intercultural Ambassador/ Editor of Multicultural publication *(Appendix 13)*
Attendance Officer *(Appendix 8)*	Policy Advisor to Government Integration Minister *(Appendix 14)*
School Principal *(Appendix 2)*	Immigrant Council of Ireland *(Appendix 21)*

Table 4.6 Internal and external interviewees

The next section will outline the profiles of external interviewees who are from a migrant background and are now established in Ireland as professionals whose work involves a range of migrant issues, advocacy, supports and shaping policy.

4.6 External Interviewees

Data obtained from the interview with three external interviewees presented the perceptions, insights and experiences from the viewpoint of individuals who lived the migrant experience, attained Irish citizenship and through their professional lives have contributed to raising the profile of migrant issues to influencing policy.

Three professional individuals from a migrant background who are working in migrant advocacy were selected as key informants and are profiled in Appendices 13, 14 and 21

The editor of the multicultural newspaper *Metro Eireann,* Mr.Chinedu Onyejelem, was selected for this study because of his personal lived experience as a migrant in Ireland and the wealth of expertise he acquired in a broad range of professional roles in migrant related endeavours, including:

- The second informant, Mr. Esabamen, was selected because of his professional contribution towards shaping policy at national level and his involvement at community level.

- The third key informant, Dr. Fidele Mutwarasibo, was interviewed by the author because of his multiplicity of professional roles, his research on migration in Ireland and subsequent publications. Currently he is the ICI's Integration and Research Manager and is spearheading education projects such as *The Pathways to Parental Leadership,* aimed at schools in order to encourage parental involvement and meet the needs of a diverse society and *Ambassadors for Change*, a mentoring programme in schools for young people with migrant backgrounds.

- The interviews with the external interviewees generated up to date, rich multi-layered data which reflected their personal experiences and their professional expertise. A profound understanding of the academic and social issues facing children of migrants was evident. The main themes from the data from the three informants are shown in Figure 4.7.

| English Language Acuisition |
| School-Home Engagement |
| Social integration |
| Identity |
| Policy |
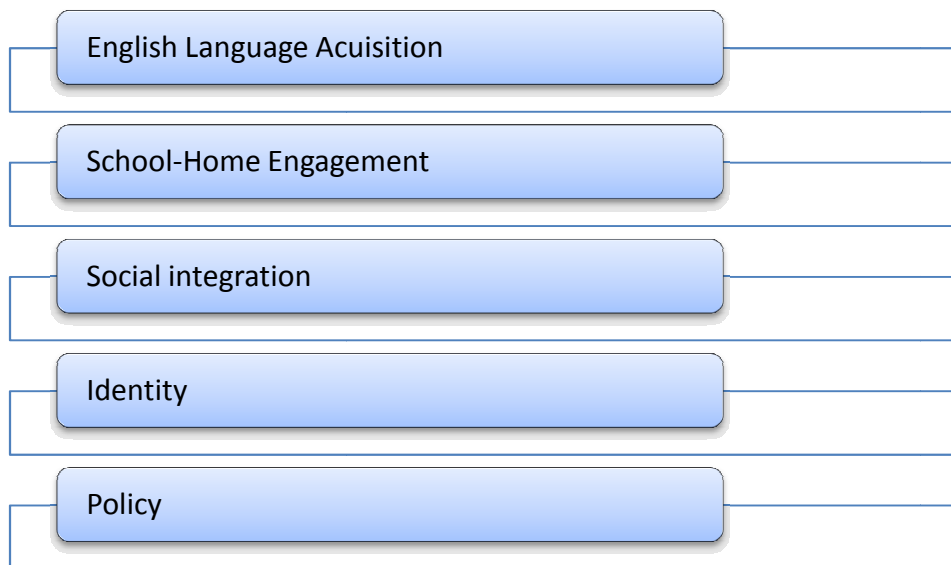
Table 4.7 Themes from external interviewees

4.7 Focus Group Participants

Participants who volunteered to participate in the discussions were from different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds and were in the country for varying lengths of time from three to twelve years. All participants were taking State examinations that particular academic year – ten were preparing for the Junior Certificate exam while nine were preparing for the Leaving Certificate

Junior Certificate *(3rd year)*	Leaving Certificate *(6th year)*
Group 1: Abbon, Baibina, Cajetan, Danilo Elana	*Group 3* Cassius, Justus, Claudia, Darius, Flavius
Group 2: Nazaire, Taurin, Octavo, Raphael, Quinci	*Group 4*: Harata, Barita Suzi, Christaldo

Table 4.8 Focus Group participants

4.8 Approaches to Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher adopted an interpretative approach to the investigation. He looked closely at what the participants were saying, in order 'to understand the subjective world of human experience' (Cohen et al. 2007, p.21) and in an endeavour to understand their understandings about their world (Thomas 2009, p.75). In qualitative data the researcher is concerned with interpreting what's going on. Interpretive analysis is a reflexive interaction between the researcher and the data. The researcher makes sense of the data in terms of 'noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities' (Cohen 2007, p.184). Chunks of data are put into categories "as categories emerge or as data emerge that fit in an existing category" (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p.105).

Sorting through the data again and again captures the core meanings and these become "the essential building blocks of your analysis" (Thomas 2009, p.198). The constant comparison technique repeatedly compares the data across a range of situations (Robson 2002, p.193) and contributes to theory generation.

Decisions about the selection, coding and categorisation of the phenomena that are under investigation (LeCompte and Preissle 1993), are influenced by the researcher's previous theoretical knowledge (Miles and Huberman 1994). Via the interpretivist tradition, the researcher interacts with the data in a 'reflexive, reactive interaction' (Cohen at al. 2007 p. 469). As the analysis is carried out through the stages of coding, commenting and reflecting (memos), categorisation, data reduction and synthesis, 'a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories' (Robson 2002, p.459), is developed.

In the interpretivist tradition, the researcher interacts with the data in a 'reflexive, reactive interaction' (Cohen at al., 2007 p 469). As the analysis is carried out through the coding, commenting and reflecting (memos), categorisation, data reduction and synthesis stages, 'a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories' (Robson 2002 p459), is developed. Throughout the process, 'great caution and self-awareness must be exercised' (Cohen at al., 2007 p 469) in order to offset researcher bias, interest and agenda.

Throughout the process "great caution and self-awareness must be exercised" (Cohen at al. 2007, p.469) in order to offset researcher bias, interest and agenda. In undertaking this research, as an insider (see 1.3.1 and 3.12), he needed to guard against his own preconceptions (Robson 2002) and apply caution and reflexivity (Hodkinson 2005) to the process.

4.8.1 Using Qualitative Data Analysis Software

Qualitative researchers increasingly rely on data analysis software such as NVivo to facilitate in the organisation of the data. The researcher carries out the different stages of what is called coding, where he draws the data from the interviews and focus group discussions and divides them into different categories "that are developed in the ongoing research process" Kelle (2004 cited in Seale et al. 2004, p.456)

The use of software packages in qualitative research has potential merits in relation to efficiency, flexibility and opportunities to cross reference. On the other hand, concerns about alienation between the researcher and the theory, epistemology and data have been voiced but "seem to be overemphasized," Kelle (2004, cited in Seale et al. p.448). Prior to the analysis, the researcher carried out the interviews, facilitated the focus group discussions, recorded and later transcribed the content. In this way a familiarity with the data was established and this

was further enhanced during the analytical process of coding, categorizing and interpreting of the data, (as outlined in 4.8.2- 4.8.4) in preparation for the narrative.

4.8.2 Analytical Strategy

The NVivo computer software package was used in the analysis of the data in this study. In qualitative data analysis is done from transcript text as words are "assembled, clustered, broken into semiotic segments" (Miles and Huberman 1994, p.8). The isolation of themes from the written material initiates the analysis process. Phases of the analysis are as follows:

- **Phase 1-** Broad participant driven open coding of interview and focus group transcripts was carried out in order to deconstruct the data into general themes. These themes were given clear labels
- **Phase 2**- In order to advance the structuring of the coded material, themes from phase 1 were reordered into categories, by grouping related themes and organising them into a framework. This phase involved the restructuring, re-labelling and merging of nodes.
- **Phase 3** - also called 'coding on' which involved the breaking down of the restructured themes into sub-themes.

4.8.3 Categorisation of data

The first phase of the coding process included the importing of interview and focus group transcripts and the implementation of open coding which is the transformation of the data from the interviews and discussions into manageable sources for analysis. Coding, according to Bazeley (2007, p.66) is "a method of working with and building knowledge about data."

In order to ensure thoroughness of coding and to generate ideas that relate structure to process, Bazeley (2007, p.78), advises to interrogate the text with who, what, when, why, and how questions.

With the NVivo software package, Phase 1 of the process is referred to as Open Coding and it involved the deconstruction of data into units called nodes, each created from the identification of different categories from the transcripts. The process of Open Coding assists in the management of data into categories and the link to the source (text in transcript) is retained. Parts of the data may be assigned to more than one code thus setting up linkages

between codes. This early stage of the coding is participant led and the process allowed the researcher to divide the text into categories and to code 'references' or units of meaning to them.

In this study, deconstruction of the data from the transcripts of nine interviews and four focus group discussions resulted in the creation of twenty three nodes which are listed in Table 4.9. together with the number of references articulated by participants. The table clearly shows the issues which materialised from the analysis of the interview and focus group material. The listing of the number of references associated with each topic categorises it in rank order, with academic achievement emerging with the highest number of references (109) followed by integration (94), school-parent contact (82).

Node Name	References
Academic Achievement	109
Integration	94
School-Parent contact	82
English Language Support	59
Pathways to Integration	47
Attendance patterns	39
Multidisciplinary response	34
Racism	30
Parent-child communication about school issues	15
Heterogeneity	14
Participation in extra-curricular activities	13
Student wellbeing	13
College and the world of work	13
Grouping	12
Marginalization	11
Take-up of TY	10
Homework Support	9
Identity	9
Policy	7
Language spoken outside school	6
Resources	6
Socio-economic disadvantage	5
Punctuality	1

Table 4.9. Nodes

Phases 2 and 3, *(Categorization of Codes and Coding On)* is both participant and research led and recreates a framework for analysis. The process is interpretive as it entails the reordering of the coded material into a more hierarchical structure, which contributes to advancing theoretical thinking and analyses. Subsequent to carrying out what are called 'coding queries' the researcher explored the coded content to check for recurrence. The reduction of the 23 original nodes to 7 themes was the result overlap, intersection and duplication within the nodal groupings.

- Academic Progress
- Student well-being
- School and Home
- Supports
- Identity
- Integration
- Policy

The 'coding on' phase resulted in the breaking down of the nodes into subcategories. For example, the Academic Progress theme contained the subcategories: academic achievement, attendance patterns, college and the world of work, English language support, homework support and punctuality, as illustrated in *Table 4.10.*

Themes	Subcategories
1. Academic Progress	Academic achievement Attendance patterns College and the world of work English language support Homework Support Punctuality
2. Student well-being	Identity Racism
3. School and Home	English language proficiency Other language(s) spoken outside the classroom and after school Parent-child communication about school issues School-parent contact
4. Supports	English language support Homework Support Multidisciplinary response
5. Identity	English language support Grouping
6. Integration	English language support Heterogeneity Integration Marginalization Participation in extra- curricular activities Pathways to integration
7. Policy	Resources Socio-economic disadvantage Take-up of the Transition Year (TY) option

Table 4.10 Categories and sub categories

An issue can recur in the subcategories under different themes, as in the case of English Language Support which is represented under four themes – Academic progress, Supports, Integration and Identity. If we relate this to the research question on academic and social integration the English language support aspect is in a pivotal position centre of academic progress and social integration. The significant link between fluency in the English language and academic progress is contained in the literature (Cummins 1979, 1980; Smyth et al., 2009; Fionda 2009; Lyons and Little 2009), as is the correlation between level of fluency and social integration/identity (Devine 2011; Molcho, Kelly and Nic Gabhainn 2011; Curry et al. 2011). Further discussion on the findings, their link with the literature and theoretical framework will be completed in the next chapter.

4.8.4 Analysis and Synthesising of Data

Subsequent to categorisation of data, phases 1-3, as outlined in 4.8.2, the process continued as further analysis and synthesis of data took place. The seven themes shown in figure 4.11 were reduced to four themes by the incorporation of school-home, student well-being and identity themes into the overarching theme of social integration. The data reduction phase of the analytical process resulted in four themes: academic integration, social integration, supports and policy. The analytical strategy "sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organises data" (Miles and Huberman 1994 p11) which leads to findings being woven into narrative.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter the research process was delineated by the timeframe indicating the dates, the instruments and the personnel involved at each stage of the fieldwork. A period of fieldwork which took place over two years and two months was outlined from May 2009 start-up interview to the final interview in July 2011.

The findings from the pilot study, and their connection with the construction of instruments for interview, questionnaire and focus group discussion was outlined. In order to demonstrate how the findings from the questionnaire will be presented in the next chapter, an exemplar was presented. A brief outline of the professional background of the internal and external informants was presented.

The data from the pilot study and the questionnaire were manually processed and the data from all the interviews and focus groups were transformed into manageable sources for analysis by the use of the NVivo package. A demonstration of the analytical strategy for this

study was presented by a clear description of the phases of the data interrogation, coding, analysis and synthesis. The thorough nature of the analytical process guided the researcher to a deep understanding of the data laying the foundation for the comprehensive discussion of the evidence based findings in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Research Findings and Discussion

5.0. Introduction

The previous Chapter outlined the key themes that emerged from the research analysis and that were deemed to be important in light of the research question, the students' social and academic needs and the extent of the support available or otherwise to help students meet their educational and integration needs. While many of these themes were anticipated, there are some that were unexpected and outside of the a priori considerations.   In this chapter the themes are discussed from the perspective of the literature review and the theoretical framework. The researcher prioritised the findings based on the issues that came up repeatedly from all sources of data collection – teachers, management, support personnel and immigrant students. He prioritised English Language acquisition because in the attempt to answer the research question it emerged, both from the pilot and the main study findings, at the nexus of academic and social integration. The influence of English language proficiency on academic progress, attendance patterns, parental engagement, friendship patterns and students' identity is evident in the findings as categorised in Table 4.10. English Language support leads the dialogue on policy and practice at both state and school level.   The researcher confers substantial importance to attendance patterns, as the issues surrounding absenteeism and truancy reflect and intersect with the findings about friendship patterns, parental engagement and the other pertinent issues as presented in Table 4.10 and analysed in this chapter. The first section of this chapter is an analysis of the findings related to English language acquisition.

This chapter begins with an analysis of findings related to English language provision in section 5.1 and develops a discussion on how it impacts on the learning and the social spheres in the educational setting.

Section 5.2 analyses the patterns of attendance from the perspectives of teachers, two post holders and school principal and examines the factors influencing absenteeism, from the newcomer students points of view.

The issue of parental engagement with the school is analysed in Section 5.3. The ways in which school-parent relationship impacts on student learning, parental acquisition of

knowledge and power is analysed. The analysis presented in this section draws on the views of teacher respondents and the SCP Coordinator while a national perspective was provided by the former policy advisor to the former Minister for Integration.

Friendship patterns among immigrant students are analysed in section 5.4. Factors influencing friendship formation such as, exclusion/ inclusion, self-segregation and school micro-geography are analysed in this section. These aspects of friendship formations intersect with the students' narrative of xenophobic and racist behaviour, which are discussed in section 5.5

Section 5.6 analyses the reasons for the low participation rates in the optional curricular Transition Year (TY) programme through the student lens in focus group discussions. Section 5.7 deals with the related issue of participation in extra-curricular programmes.

While the chapter is divided into seven stages, the researcher recognizes the considerable overlap and interconnection between the themes which are discussed in each section.

5.1. English Language Acquisition

The findings in this study demonstrate the major link between English language acquisition, academic attainment and social integration. The significant contribution of English Language proficiency to social /cultural capital is discussed in 1.3.2. The trajectory of English Language support in Ireland from 1996 (Circular 12/96) to 2012 (Circular 0009/2012) is delineated in 1.4. The major role played by English language acquisition in the process integration is emphasised in extant government policy documents such as *Migration Nation* and the *Intercultural Education Strategy*.

In the discussion on English language the terms EAL and EFL are used. Teachers and students refer to EFL as on the school timetable. English language acquisition is at the nexus of academic and social integration. Teachers were surveyed on the effectiveness of EFL/EAL provision in the school. The responses from the 44 teachers are tabulated in Table 5.3.

Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
22%	31%	22%	11%	0	15.5%

Table 5.1 English as A Foreign/Another Language (EFL/EAL) provision

The responses indicated that 22% of the 44 teachers, who returned the questionnaire survey, thought that EAL/EFL support was "very good" and 31% responded that EAL/EFL support was "good." Favourable comments were made regarding, the "excellent availability" and the "very good support for foreign nationals" and the contribution of the EAL Teacher towards the academic and social integration of children of migrants. Teacher respondents who were favourable towards EAL/EFL support, acknowledged the benefits for students

A lot of energy and resources were put into establishing the provision of EAL/EFL tuition in the school. Many students have benefited greatly from this.

Teacher questionnaire respondent

The team of four teachers, co-ordinated by a post-holder (IO) is a possible explanation to the 53% positive rating for EAL/EFL support . They may have taken the view that all the issues relating to newcomers could now be dealt with by the EAL team and the IO.

Some student participants who were favourable towards EAL/EFL support, acknowledged the educational benefits for themselves.Suzi's affirmative comment typifies this response.

Suzi: *The EFL classes were good for our education* Focus Group participant (6thyear)

However, some students pointed out the shortcomings in the structure of EAL support provision. One 6th year participant commented that "as time passed their (EFL classes) usefulness became less" while other 6th year could look back and pinpoint the defects in the provision as demonstrated in the following contributions to the focus group discussions on the topic.

Barita: *In third year we were all put in together-didn't matter what level we were.*

Suzi: *That was no good for students who knew more English*

Barita: *…and no good for student like me who had very little English.*

Focus Group participants (6thyear)

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When the Irish economy was booming, newcomer students arrived continuously and sporadically and were at a major disadvantage if they arrived during term. As the school IO pointed out, despite school efforts to encourage involvement with extra-curricular activities, students with little or no English became very dependent on students from their own national group and socialised among themselves. This reflects findings in the literature (Smyth et al. 2009; Curry et al. 2011). The tendency to mix with their own national group means that 'they don't tend to make the same level of progress' (IO), in the acquisition of English Language skills. The age of the student and the timing of their arrival in the country are significant factors for English language proficiency. Younger students who arrive in primary or in the early months of secondary, had more time to adjust but for older students entering Senior Cycle it is particularly daunting as they have less than two years to prepare for the Leaving Certificate examination.

Children of migrants, arriving in schools since the onset of the economic austerity measures, which has resulted in a dramatic reduction of EAL supports to newcomer students, are facing even greater obstacles to academic and social integration than their counterparts during the boom years. The cuts in EAL provision, the increase in pupil teacher ratio and the loss of middle management positions (the loss of the school I O) have impacted negatively on school support structures for all students. In times of austerity, competition for scarce resources becomes more acute.

A parent may complain that attention is taken away from my child. I can understand that. International students who come mid-session can disrupt everybody and can take up time. (Policy Advisor)

Prior to 2007 EFL/EAL provision was based on two teachers for each school for two years. This unrefined approach to English language support led to serious deficiencies in the system. The cap was lifted in 2007 (Oireachtas.ie) (DES 2011). Despite the improvement in provision as a result of the lifting of the cap, Lyons and Little (2009) found that the implementation of English language support in secondary schools was poorly coordinated due to inadequate in-service and poor communication between EAL and subject teachers. This is reflected in the findings in this study as outlined.

The responses from the teacher questionnaire showed that 22% rated EFL support as "average" as "the intensive English language programme ended with cutbacks," meaning that

the support "cannot work as effectively." A Teacher respondent noted that the provision cut "to a max of 2 teachers isn't enough for such a big school."

EFL/EAL support was rated as "poor" by 11% of teacher respondents. The teachers commented that due to the cutbacks on EFL/EAL allocation for 2010/2011, language support class sizes were increased for Junior Cycle students and could not be offered to Senior Cycle students. In an interview, the school Principal reiterated this point.

It is getting more difficult as cutbacks to English language support means that some newcomer students will not have an EAL class but will have to stay in Irish to study. (School Principal)

Christaldo*: In 5ᵗʰ and 6ᵗʰ year EFL classes became study classes and students not doing Irish were also in the EFL. Then students did homework because the teacher was not an EFL teacher but was there to supervise the class.* (Focus Group participant 6th year)

During the course of the fieldwork which began in 2009 and finished in 2011 the EFL/EAL teacher allocation for the school changed from 4.5 to .27 teachers. Speaking in 2011, the Principal outlined the difficulties faced by the school from the management point of view while recognizing the adverse impact on children of migrants.

*This school year the provision for our school was the equivalent of two teachers. That has now changed. I now am down to almost one quarter of a teacher for the whole school. From the equivalent of two teachers to .27! That's basically a problem for me and will be a **huge loss** for the newcomer students.* (School Principal)

The provision was further cut when Circular 0009/2012 directed post primary schools to merge Learning Support and Language Support into a single allocation process (DES 2012). The "huge loss" for children of migrants at second-level, continues as education cutbacks are implemented year on year.

There is a convergence of views among the respondents and in the literature that newcomer students need to attain a high level of proficiency in the English language in order to achieve their academic potential in the Irish second level education system. The assertion that a poor level of English poses a real barrier to academic and social integration among immigrant

children in the school system was voiced by all groups of respondents (teachers, management, external interviewees) in this study.

Newcomer students with low levels of proficiency in the English language are highly unlikely to experience equality, inclusiveness and freedom in schools as advocated by Banks (2008) in his vision for more equitable and effective educational systems for ethically and culturally diverse students. As EAL resources to schools have been substantially curtailed, children of migrants with limited or no English cannot be supported appropriately with the acquisition of the lingua franca and could effectively be disenfranchised in the educational system. Being unable to fully access the curriculum because of the linguistic impediment the newcomer student is unable to derive the full benefits of the educational system and is unlikely to reach his or her academic potential. This group is emerging as an educationally disadvantaged group in Irish schools. From this disadvantaged and marginalised position the newcomer will fail to experience educational success. Subjecting children of migrants to an educational system that fails to affirm their educational needs establishes a socially unjust order for a particular group of students.

Children of migrants face barriers to their academic progress due to inadequate support. The austerity measures resulted in a severe cut-back on a disadvantaged group of students and is a denial of support which impacts on academic attainment and widens the performance gap between newcomers and their peers.

5.1.1 Academic Progress

Students expressed the view that they could not perform well either in class or in exams particularly in the first three years of their secondary education because they did not understand the content, the questions asked or the homework given by teachers. The difficulties experienced by students were language specific in the sense that as they struggled to learn the English language, subjects like Science, Home Economics and Business were named by the participants as challenging. In the case of such subjects the students encountered an additional layer of subject specific language and terms which posed further challenges to learning.

Students explained why *"some of us would pick and choose classes"* because of *"being bored"* and *"learning nothing."* A student of Middle Eastern origin, described her experience.

Harata: *We arrived in Ireland in first year- tiny, tiny English. I was 12 I did not like school at all-in classroom I was thinking when is this class going to end because **I did not understand anything*** (*student's emphasis*) (Focus Group participant, 6th year)

Attendance in class did not always mean that the student was progressing academically. The experience of being unable to participate in the learning process is a barrier to academic progress.

Danilo: *If your English is not good it is so hard to learn and teacher speaks very fast. You stay quiet because you do not know how to say the question.* (Focus Group participant, 3rd year)

Junior Cycle students struggled with exams and the researcher observed that they were uncomfortable talking about exam performance. The English language remained as a barrier for them. As one third year opined:

Danilo: *...questions in exams can still confuse me a little in some subjects. I am wondering what are they asking me to write about.* (Focus group participant 3rd year)

For Junior Cycle focus group participants EAL support was insufficient for classroom learning and exam performance resulting in failure in academic failure. Student responses indicate that EAL provision did not equip students with all the necessary skills for optimum classroom and examination performance. This finding coincides with Fionda 2009 who assert that effective English Language provision should prepare students effectively for examinations.

According to the I O *"most of them have not attained an acceptable level of English even after 2 years."* When the 6th year students reflected on their experience classroom in the early years of secondary school they used expressions such as *"not good" "held back"* and *"couldn't understand."*

Barita: *It was very difficult for me in 2nd and 3rd year and then in 3rd year I had to do the Junior Certificate and even then my English was not good. It was too embarrassing to ask questions-didn't understand basic words for homework.* (Focus group participant 6th year)

The school Principal stated that in the majority of cases *"exam results of newcomer students are relatively poor"* and a check of Leaving Certificate state examination results, from the

school database clearly showed a performance gap between newcomers and Irish peers indicating learning outcomes which are below their cognitive ability (Smyth et al. 2009). Data from the OECD Programme For International Student Assessment PISA (2009) an international study of 15 year olds literacy in reading, mathematics and science. Students with an immigrant background scored significantly lower on reading performance and in mathematics than their Irish counterparts. The gap was smaller for mathematics. A key point is that the scores were lower for immigrant students where English was not spoken at home McGinnity et al. (2011).

The findings on the inadequacy of provision in this case study school reflect the findings of larger studies such as Lyons and Little (2009). The shortcomings related to language provision that are not solely confined to Irish schools as Cummins (1979, 1997) demonstrates in relation to Canadian schools.

The researcher observed that Senior Cycle newcomer students were more comfortable talking about examination than their Junior Cycle counterparts and they hoped to improve on previous state exam performance. An improvement in their English language skills since Junior Cert, an expressed wish *"to stay in Ireland"* and like the majority of Irish peers in the school, an ambition to move on to third level (University, Institute of Technology or FETAC Level 5) meant that they were expressing their aspirations for college.

Christaldo: *(I) hope to do better in the Leaving Certificate because I understand the questions better and I want to go to third level –did not know how to study –am better now.* (Focus group participant 6th year)

The principal also commented that every year there are a small number of newcomer students who successfully make the transition to Third Level and during that particular year (2011), one Central European 6th year student was achieving very well academically

Fabek is doing the Leaving and it will be interesting to see what he will obtain. He is very hardworking, ambitious, and plans to go to university as his brother Abelardo did last year. (School Principal)

Overall students' response to the challenges of English language acquisition and academic integration varied from perseverance in the face of barriers to opting out by non-attendance

for a day, a number of days, half a day or a for a class period (mitching). The findings related to the varied attendance patterns of newcomer students will be dealt with in the next section.

5.2 Attendance Patterns

Poor attendance tends to impact negatively on academic performance and here again academic attainment and social integration are interlinked. Absenteeism operates at two levels.

1. Students are absent from school which means that they do not attend and are marked absent on the register for each day that they do not attend.
2. Students attend school and are marked present on the register but choose to absent themselves from particular classes or choose to leave the school early. This pattern of absenteeism is referred to as truancy and is commonly called 'mitching'.

The school I O opined that when newcomer students opt out of class by mitching it may be because they are in a classroom situation where "they can't understand what is being said." The view corresponds with what students said about learning 'nothing' in class.

Harata said *'...I was thinking when is this class going to end because **I did not understand anything.**'* (student's emphasis). Justus said that mitching was prevalent among his group (newcomers) *'...because they think that it is a waste of time in class,'* while Claudia stated that *'some'* of her friends do not go to class *'because they are bored.'* They are bored because *'...they do not understand everything in the class.'*

The researcher surveyed teachers in order to gauge their perceptions of the attendance patterns of the newcomer students. The National Educational Welfare Boards (NEWB) criteria of 20 days absences out of a school year of 167 days, was used as a benchmark for poor attendance.

The responses indicated that attendance of the newcomer students was rated as "poor" by 35% of the teachers. The comments from this substantial group of respondents, based on their individual experiences as classroom teachers, varied from "poor," "very poor," "an issue," "a huge problem," and "very sporadic," to "unpredictable." One respondent observed that attendance was:

Particularly low in Senior Cycle for weaker students. *My 6th year Maths class has 3 newcomer students who mitch frequently.* (Teacher respondent)

Teachers noted that poor attendance patterns are common among children of migrants and some respondents offered reasons related to inter country travel during term time. According to a teacher respondent *'they also tend to take extended holidays in their home country during term time.'*

They spend a month here and go back over to Poland for a month or whatever…(IO)

These views corresponded with a third year student who explained why she missed time from school.

Baibina: *The cert about the allergy is in S_____ the country where I come from. I have to go to a specialist back home so I miss time to do that.* (3rd yr participant)

The school Principal and the school Attendance Officer (AO) stated that while a small proportion of children of migrants have good attendance, many fall into the poor attendance category.

Some come to school every day and participate but that (number) is veering towards a minority. I observed a polarisation with many having a poor attendance. (AO)

… attendance patterns of newcomer students in the school fall into two separate categories- a proportion are very good or excellent-90% attendance or over while many fall into the poor attendance category and within this some have extremely poor attendance. (School Principal)

In the Focus Group discussions respondents were forthcoming in relation to *"poor"* attendance. Students stated that their attendance was *"not good"* and that *"some students don't care about their attendance."* A student, stated that he was failing in many subjects because *"attendance is not good."*

The school's AO expressed the view that:

A teacher meeting a foreign student coming in late or leaving early is less likely to follow it up when the student doesn't understand the teachers' questions.

Some student responses suggested that a blind eye was turned when newcomer students were *"found"* to be absent from a particular class.

Abbon: *If you were "on the hop" from a class and a teacher asks you on the corridor you could say "I am going to EFL class." Teachers who don't know the student could follow this up but usually believe it.*

Quinci: *One time we mitched class and stayed in an empty room and when Mr P. found us, we told him it was an EFL class and he left us there.*

The AO stated that *"year heads and teachers were less likely to follow up"* on cases of persistent absenteeism among newcomers and they *"don't get suspended over mitching"*

A student offers a reflective insight into the situation of absenteeism among newcomer children:

Justus: *When teachers don't ask you why it is easier. In my first two years here , if I was absent, they didn't bother asking for a note. I felt invisible.* (3rd year)

The poignancy in the statement *"I felt invisible"* (Justus) reveals in a powerful way how alienated and how marginalised the student felt in the school in the early years. The statement conveys the student's weak sense of belonging to the school community. There is no impression that the young person has a stake in the school. In fact the strongest feeling that the student appears to have in relation to the schooling experience is a feeling that it didn't really matter to the teachers whether he was present or not. The sense of separateness from the normative life in the school is captured here, a sense of being excluded. Teachers may do so inadvertently as they perceive the ethnic minority status of the student, and view the student through a 'deficit lens.'

The inconsistency by teachers (as expressed by the student and the AO above) in the application of sanctions regarding absenteeism of newcomer students signals a clear message that all students are not equal when it comes to application of disciplinary procedures related to absenteeism. A less than rigorous response suggests a tacit acceptance of poor attendance patterns among newcomer students which could be interpreted as disinterest on the part of staff, in their educational progress. From the point of view of the AO the attitude from some staff in some cases was *"dismissive"*

"he (student) hardly ever comes in"- was a typical response- kind of dismissive in some cases."

Teachers' acquiescence with absenteeism among children of migrants was picked up by the students Quinci and Justus (comments above). The failure of school personnel to follow up on mitching could be interpreted as discriminatory, as Irish students would be subjected to sanctions. If newcomer students forms the view that the school authorities perceive them as 'peripheral and problematic' (Nowlan 2008, p.262) because, for one, the school is not concerned with their attendance, it is possible for the young person to extrapolate that the school is not committed to securing the best possible educational outcomes for him/her.

A number of teachers alluded to the influence of the family in relation to attendance pattern. the influence of family on attendance patterns are demonstrated in the Darmody et al. (2013) ESRI study which found that a child whose mother's native language was not English or Irish was nine times more likely to have poor school attendance than a child of a native English or Irish speaker. This is an important study as there is a paucity of studies on attendance patterns of immigrant students in Ireland. Despite the focus of the ESRI study being on primary schools the findings are of interest to this researcher as irregular attendance patterns at primary level can continue into secondary school.

Darmody et al. (2013) concluded that absenteeism needs to be treated as "a multi-dimensional issue" which requires interventions based on an individual's circumstances. At school level this means that schools need to be more proactive in getting to know the family circumstances of immigrant families. In non-DEIS schools where there is no home-school community (HSCL) liaison officer there may be no designated person to carry out this function as happened in this case study school in 2010 when the IO and the AO posts were lost due to education cutbacks. The number of Education Welfare Officers (EWO's) in the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) is insufficient to follow up on attendances nationwide, so follow-up is not done.

In this case study school the findings on attendance patterns demonstrate multi-layered issues which are not being addressed fully either at national or local school level. Support for the individual student is clearly needed in order to facilitate an encouraging and fair learning environment where the student's needs are prioritised. As in the cases of English language acquisition 5.1 and parental engagement with school (discussed in 5.3), these are issues

which straddle both academic and social integration. Parental influence and family circumstances in relation to attendance patterns, communication with the school and integration will be the focus of the next section.

5. 3. Parental Engagement- The Home School Relationship

Parental support for the child's education has been widely researched and deemed to be a very important contributor to positive educational outcomes, (Heath & Clifford, 1990; Sheldon and Epstein 2005; Barton and Coley, 2007). Parents or guardians are expected, in compliance with the school rules, to explain students' absences, both for the full and for part of the school day. A written note is inserted in the school journal and signed by a parent or guardian. The note is presented to the class teacher for validation purposes. In relation to newcomer students 28.9% of the teacher respondents indicated that explanatory notes for a full day's absence were "poor" while 15.5% rated this practice as "very poor." Almost 45% of teachers who completed the questionnaire registered high levels of dissatisfaction with the explanatory note system for absenteeism among newcomer students. Two issues were highlighted in a number of responses:

1. The question of reliability
2. Parents' lack of proficiency in the English language

Dissatisfaction amongst teachers, with absences by newcomer students *for part of the day* was even higher with 42% of respondents rating this item as "poor" and a further 25.5% rating it as "very poor." Unless a clear written and signed explanation is provided from the parents, absences for part of the day (truancy), is deemed a serious breach of school discipline. High levels of dissatisfaction regarding explanatory notes from parents of newcomer students in relation to *absences for one week or over* were evident in the teacher responses, with 31% rating the item as "poor" and an additional 13.3% gave this item a "very poor" rating. The following teacher comment encapsulates the challenges regarding explanatory notes for persistent absenteeism.

Notes are often forged or written by students themselves due to parents' language skills being poor. It is difficult to verify explanations for absences.

The dissatisfaction with the explanatory notes for absences reflect:

The lack of proficiency in the English language is an obvious barrier to communication between the school and the home of immigrant families (Taguma et al. 2009). The failure of the school to address the barrier of communication that exists between the school and the home is an issue which arises.

5.3.1 Power Imbalance

Problems with parental disengagement are linked to the language barrier which prevents a parent from being fully involved in their child's education, irrespective of their aspirations. In such cases *"power is with the child" (*Integration Manager of ICI) and can lead to *"a wide gap"* (Policy Advisor to Minister for Integration), *"a division between the (immigrant) parents and children is developing."*

A disconnect exists between the parent and the child-absolutely and this is even more evident today, ten years on. Those kids who came into the primary system at 6 or 7 years of age are now 16 or 17 and I know that differences between parent and children have really widened. (Policy Advisor)

The student participants in this study articulated this power imbalance by describing the screening process that they apply to communications from school to home. In some cases the student can be selective about what s/he tells and *"doesn't tell"* (focus group participant). The message from the school is lost in transition or in translation. In recent years schools have introduced the **call parents** texting system in order to get information and notification to parents in a prompt manner. Parents with little or no English would be unable to understand the message if they receive it. A finding in this study is that some immigrant parents do not receive any of the **call parents** texts from the school.

Justus: *Not all parents get the call parents message because the contact number used is sometimes the student's number. When the form was filled when the student was applying to the school, the student might put in his or her own number.* (6th Year)

Parents may be left unaware of very important issues like their child's attendance patterns or the dates of parent -teacher meetings or information evenings about senior cycle options and subject choice.

Where the parent does not understand the note from the school, the child can dismiss the importance of the note when communicating with the parent particularly in cases such as *"a*

sanction from the school was issued in relation to a kid," (Policy Advisor). The imbalance results in disconnection between parent and child as well as a disjointed relationship between parent and school. Opportunities are lost, as the disempowered parent may be unable to contribute in a meaningful way to the child's education.

The *"language gulf,"* (Policy Advisor), between parent and child impacts on educational progress. Student responses such as *"she (parent) doesn't understand,"* (3rd year student) and *"doesn't know"* (6th year), sum up the disempowered position in which these parents find themselves in relation to the education of their children. If knowledge is power, the lack of knowledge is powerlessness. The SCP co-ordinator stated that the student is *"at a disadvantage"* when the parent cannot engage with the school (Devine 2011; Schofield 2006;Taguma et al. 2009).

Generally parents help their children with decision- making in areas such as subject choice and curricular options. Decision making by parents is influenced by knowledge acquired through induction meetings, information evenings, parent-teacher meetings and appointments or phone conversations with school authorities and through networking with other parents. The immigrant parent, new to the area, with little or no English is placed outside of the school knowledge reservoir.

The gulf between school and immigrant family as portrayed in the research in this study lessens the potential for the parents to operate in a valuable support role in the academic and social education of the newcomer student.

5.3.2 Attendance at Parent-Teacher Meetings
Low levels of engagement between immigrant parents and school has emerged as a key finding in this study. From the teacher questionnaire findings 33% rated school-parent engagement of immigrant parents as "poor" while 11.2% thought that school-parent engagement was "very poor." These responses indicate a high level of dissatisfaction among teachers. The evidence from this research indicated that a minority of immigrant parents attend Parent - Teacher (P/T) meetings.

Teacher X: *Most do not attend p-t meetings, sometimes you never get to meet parents from 1ˢᵗ to 6ᵗʰ year.*

Teacher Y: *I have noticed very few parents of foreign nationals come to P/T meetings.*

Teacher Z: *I seldom see parents of newcomer students at parent teacher meetings.*

Teacher V: *very few parents of foreign nationals come to P/T meetings.*

The cited comments capture a glimpse of the experiences of teachers in relation to parental non - engagement with school as reflected in attendance at parent-teacher meetings. The data from the internal and external interviews, and focus group discussions showed that attendance of immigrant parents at parent-teacher meetings was low and in some cases non-existent. Also there are problems for the parents who attend as a teacher respondent pointed out. For the parents who attend, their lack of English language and lack of knowledge in relation to our educational system prevents them from having some engagement with the system.

Occasionally a parent will be accompanied by the child, in the role of interpreter, a practice which has its limitations as the student is placed in conflicting roles, which are not all consistent with his or her juvenile status. The student is placed in the role of interpreter, which gives the young person the scope to exercise their own judiciousness regarding the messages they convey to parents. In such a role s/he is the main communication conduit between the school and home and the teacher may not wish to raise sensitive topics.

The viewpoints expressed by teacher respondents for low or non-attendance at parent teacher meetings, are that the *"grasp of English"* may be poor and that immigrant parents are *"struggling with our language."* The language barrier between parents and school was identified by 18 % of the respondents as a barrier to effective parent-school engagement.

Teacher A: *…the language barrier is an issue for parents even more than their children.*

Teacher B: *Major problem is the lack of English by parents and use of their own language when at home.*

However, it would be facile to conclude that the poor levels of engagement between the migrant parents and school could be attributed solely to the English language barrier. Within the immigrant community there are people who communicate well in English, particularly in the East European communities some of whom are settled in Ireland for over eight years. Cultural issues may be impacting on parent-school engagement. Findings from this study indicate that the immigrant parent may be *"intimidated by the school system"* (ICI), and may

be *"suspicious of bureaucratic formal structures"* (IA) or may be *"embarrassed"* (6th year newcomer).

The *"lost in translation"* and *"power imbalance"* scenarios already referred to in relation to notifications from the school may be operating also as students with poor attendance and unsatisfactory academic records may proactively keep that knowledge from the parent/guardian.

The collaborative and respectful relationship between school and home, which is highly conducive to supporting a child's education has failed to develop between many of the immigrant families and the school personnel. Lack of proficiency in English and cultural differences and between school and home, are only part of the explanation. The main modes of contact (letter, *call parents* text), between school and home, used for the majority school population does not seem to be wholly effective for communication with migrant families as the findings in this study indicate.

The immigrant parent may feel as an 'outsider' who struggles to access sufficient knowledge about the school system Mitchell (2008). They are further disadvantaged as social and cultural capital (language, culture specific knowledge and skills) are devalued in the immigrant context (Darmody and McCoy 2011, p.147). Gramci's theory of cultural hegemony and Bourdieu's theory (discussed in 2.4.1), are applicable as the values and mores of the dominant culture, perpetuated in the education system, leave the immigrant parent outside of 'the invisible codes of power'

5.4. Friendship patterns

The EAL/EFL support, lauded by some teacher respondents (53%   see5.1.2) as a positive force in the academic and social integration of students, resulted in newcomer students *"socialising just among other non-English speaking students"* during break and lunchtime (IO). When the EAL classes were initially set up in this school, one particular classroom was used and this resulted in *"a kind of ghetto"* (IO) being established in that area (classroom and corridor outside). Initially it was thought that this tendency to *'hang out'* and *'stick together'* (teacher respondents) syndrome was an unintended consequence of a designated EAL area.

The students made that their own…and despite our best effort we couldn't dig them out of there to mix with the other students. (IO)

Interestingly, the Policy Advisor, an external interviewee, referred to the clustering of all newcomer students into EAL classes as *"segregation regardless of the level of English."* Subject teachers, EAL teachers and newcomer students comment on what Smyth at al. (2009, p.28) call *"some difficulties within the social sphere."* Students participating in the research recognized that due to ease of communication they will naturally gravitate towards socialisation with fellow nationals.

Rafael: *Will speak my own language even in school as many students are from my country and we meet at break.* (Student participant 3rd year)

Socialising with fellow nationals during school hours reflects patterns of socialising outside of school hours. Students watch programmes from their own countries and communicate through social media in their own language. Some of the Senior students in this study comment on this as in the following example.

Cassius: *Too many stay with Skype/ Facebook and phoning friends at home…only mixing with people from own country.* (student 6th year)

Another interesting aspect to this pattern is that in cases where a newcomer does not have a fellow national to befriend, s/he tended to make friends with other international students. Three participants (6th year) explain:

Barita: *…but only new friends from other countries.*

Suzi: *Yes and we feel comfortable with each other-understand each other.*

Harata: *Yes.*

When the EAL/EFL classes were moved from the designated room as a response to the self-segregation, the principal describes the emergence of a group in an area adjacent to his office.

Although there is still evidence that some newcomer students group together – group together for some form of support, during school breaks. They tend to congregate in the little seating area outside my office, which I think in itself is quite telling. They have taken over the short corridor, seating area there…

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The Principal alludes to their need to find a *'support'* zone in the school. As Suzi pointed out, the feeling of comfort and understanding between them is a form of support. By colonising this particular social space it would seem that they have strategically selected an area that is close to the epicentre of the school's authority, giving them some sense of security. Also in a big busy school it may be the only space available, as most Irish students would not choose an area so close to the Principal's office, as their socialisation space.

The Principal further elucidated the territorial dynamics that are played out in the social arena of the school and in particular in reference to the area known as 'The Square' which is considered by the student body to be the 'cool' space to be. The newcomer students have not staked out a territory in the most valued social space in the school, instead they have clustered in the less socially valuable but safer outpost in the precincts of the Principal's office.

I imagine that they picked that particular space because they felt unwelcome in 'The Square.' Different year groups occupy different parts of 'The Square.' 6th, 5th and TY have their own places there. It is very territorial. There is no real place in The Square for a relatively large group of international students. (Principal)

Here we have an example of exclusion from the mainstream where it would seem that students are excluding themselves from the main student body. On closer examination what is really happening is that newcomer students' choices are limited. The school authority could be perceived as passively accepting the development of territorial social spaces which pushes newcomers into peripheral areas. This passivity could be construed as tacit approval of their marginalisation to less favoured spaces within the school campus but it must be said that realistically it would be difficult for school management to intervene in a manner that would control the natural configuration of organically evolved groupings in the social spaces around the school.

It would appear at first glance that formation of friendship groupings on the basis of nationality means that immigrant students exclude themselves from the majority Irish student population thereby decreasing the opportunities to practise conversational English. The development of friendship patterns with other immigrant students as outlined in this study reflects the findings of Curry et al. (2011) and Devine (2011) both of whom observed that inter-ethnic friendships were sparse at secondary school and that student friendships

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developed along ethnic lines. Also, such groupings evolve *"because they support each other"* (AO) and gravitating towards their own national group or a mixed immigrant group could be construed as a *"coping mechanism"* (AO). The xenophobic and racist verbal abuse can be seen as a significant contributory factor towards the formation of such friendships as students seek support in groupings with fellow nationals or other immigrant children who share the same lived experience.

5.5 Xenophobia, racism and related intolerance

Studies have indicated a greater proportion of newcomer than Irish students have experienced bullying (Smyth et al. 2004,2009; Molcho et al. 2008) found that newcomer students in a number of schools reported being bullied or seeing their classmates bullied on the basis of nationality.

The Policy Advisor to the Minister for Integration stated that part of his work involved working to counter and reduce racist verbal abuse of students, particularly *"when they went into first year in second level."* He described racism as

a system that acts out prejudice based on somebody's identity - it could be national identity...when a group is not considered to be a part of the main group.

The findings in this study indicate that comments and taunts of a xenophobic, racist and intolerant nature occurred in the school with Junior Cycle newcomer students experiencing more than their counterparts in Senior Cycle. Student participants recounted their individual experiences of xenophobic comments and taunts. The following examples from the third year Focus Group discussions demonstrate the type of verbal abuse which they experienced.

Danilo: *...shouting (at me) "f***** foreigner"* or *"Go back to your own country"* or *"Polish dog"*

Quinci… *Random people on the corridor calling names, like someone shouting directly at you "foreigner" or "Get back to your own country"*

The xenophobic content of these taunts, as evinced by the use of the word 'foreigner,' display hostility and the tendency towards 'othering' of the newcomer student. Intolerance, xenophobia, stereotyping and ignorance are in evidence from the perpetrators of the verbal abuse, as the following exemplar shows:

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Barita: *Racism name calling. Yes students say to me "your country is full of prostitutes and drugs.."*

Suzie: *Go home to your country*

Danilo: *When I was in 2nd year, an Irish guy didn't like me because of my background, would say "f***** foreigner" Once at the front of the school someone pushed me, hit me, followed me and got me to fight by teasing me calling me "softie"*

The derogatory reference to Barita's country of origin as full of *'prostitutes and drugs'* is indicative of the manner in which the immigrant can be stereotyped. The newcomer students had no hesitation in naming this type of behaviour as racist in tone and intent. They were fluent, articulate and clear about the racist abuse that they had to endure, from some Irish students.

Danilo: *Elana is bullied by students in school and outside school. I have witnessed this. One particular boy threatens him and mocks him. Another said something to him about "cookies on his head" and another third year student calls him "a terrorist." This happened in Area 3 in the school.*

Elana agrees that these incidents occurred and is upset- (Researcher)

Danilo: *How one particular student (says name) is treating Elana is bullying- Elana is bullied by students in school and outside school.*

Elana: *It's Racism.*

Quinci: *Racism is a serious thing.*

Elana is very clear that the behaviour directed towards him is racist. Of Asian background this student is from what Killoran (2012) calls the "visible minority" group who because of their visible difference experience colour based racism and cruel racist slurs.

Elana: *The students who call me names, sometimes call me "black."*

I am called "terrorist" or someone might say "Bin Laden was your Dad."

The responses from Danilo (Eastern Europe) and Elana (Asia), demonstrate the emergence of a cross cultural camaraderie forged from the common ground of immigrant student

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experience. All of the above exemplars are from the third year (Junior Certificate) group and during the group discussions two students were upset because of these occurrences.

The experiences go some way towards explaining why friendship patterns (as demonstrated in 5.4.3) develop within their own nationality groups or with other international students because *'we feel comfortable with each other-understand each other'* (Suzi, focus group participant).

The internal interviewees stated that racist behaviour towards children of migrants was taking place both inside and outside of school. The school I O related a particularly nasty incident of racist abuse which was inflicted on an immigrant family whose children attended the school. The Principal described incidents of racism which were reported to him by East European and Asian students. The female students of East European origin were subjected to derogatory comments such as *"that they are _____ (name of county) tramps and they should go home."* An upset Asian boy reported to the Principal that one particular student was very aggressive towards him and repeatedly called him *"a Paki."*

We checked the (CCTV) cameras and we found the 3rd year boy who was responsible for it. There were a number of witnesses who were able to identify him.

From the perspective of the Principal reported incidents were followed up but this needs to be considered against the Smyth et al. 2009 finding that many incidents of a xenophobic, racist nature may go unreported. This is in line with previous research on Irish students which indicated that only a minority ever report being bullied (Smyth et al. 2004). The pressing issue here is underreporting.

The racist name calling occurred along corridors, in toilets and going to and from school, areas, referred to by Curry et al., (2011) as the "back stage" areas, away from teacher observation.   The insidious nature of the racial bullying means that the school authorities may not be aware of the full extent of the behaviour. The school's intelligence on racial bullying is largely dependent on self-reporting by newcomer students or indigenous students passing information onto the relevant school personnel.

Racial abuse impacts on the wellbeing of the student. One student thought that *"people hated us."* Students at the receiving end described the name calling and taunts as *"hurtful"*

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"upsetting" and *"insulting."* Other students perceived racist behaviour as a barrier to friendship formation with Irish students.

Quinci: *It was difficult to make friends with Irish at first because of the name-calling… This was upsetting and some were older.*

Danilo: *Because of the serious racism I couldn't find anything in common with the Irish.*

Racism creates division and distance between the migrant children and their indigenous Irish peers as in the case of xenophobia, it perpetuates the "othering" of the children of migrants and as the students in the research demonstrate it becomes a barrier to friendship formation with the indigenous Irish. Devine (2011) found that inter-ethnic and inter-cultural friendships were sparse at secondary school and she observed that student friendships developed along ethnic lines.

Students who are not well integrated in the school system are more vulnerable to bullying. Furthermore, the negative impact of bullying can become a barrier to integration of the immigrant child particularly for those who have only a tentative foothold on the complex social landscape of the Irish second level school. The school IO related how an Asian family who were victims of racist abuse *"closed in very much."* The "closing in" included the withdrawal of their son from participation in local soccer.

The Policy Advisor opined that in his view schools have been able to contain it.

It is in their own interest to do so, not only to maintain discipline, but also to give credence to what they are trying to teach. Isn't that the case? You (schools)are trying to teach dignity and respect all the time.

As he previously stated the department of the Ministry of Integration dealt with racism as one of the issues associated with integration and would like to "think" that the problem of racism is "contained" but as the literature shows that many incidents go unreported. This comment, political in nature, is at variance with the student narrative.

One student was of the opinion that teachers in his former school did not address the issue while two students were resigned to the on-going reality of racism.

Christaldo: *Schools can't stop racism People will always throw insults at you.*

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Danilo: *You can teach Stop Racism but some will never stop doing it.*

The Principal pointed out that the school has an anti-bullying policy and racism would come under this policy, *"so there are structures in place to deal with racism and bullying."* The anti- racism and anti-bullying policy, can only be implemented in cases where incidents are reported.

The xenophobia/ racism and related intolerance issues are addressed in an ICI initiative set up as a result of research on the immigrant student experience in some Dublin schools. In relation to the issue of racism in schools the ICI Manager states that many schools have anti-racism policies.

We mention racism and we point to a lot of resources. Here is some of the learning, some of the groups that run workshops. Here is potentially some of the ways of responding to it.

The persistent nature of xenophobic comments and racist taunts impacts on student wellbeing and on their social integration which has a negative influence on learning. It is difficult for optimum learning to take place in an atmosphere where xenophobia and racism lurks, despite the indication of acceptance voiced by the senior students.

5.6. Participation in Transition Year (TY)

Transition Year (TY) is optional for senior cycle students in the school under study in this research with a school-imposed cap of 150 students.

From the questionnaire to teachers 28.9% of respondents stated that take up and participation of children of migrants in Transition Year was "poor" and 11.2% rated it as "very poor," ratings which reflect the low uptake of TY, by children of migrants, which in this particular school was 1 per year over the three years in which the study was carried out. Teacher respondents commented that, in general, children of migrants showed a lack of interest in TY because they "don't want to do it." Teachers commented that students may perceive the TY year as "prolonging their time in secondary school."

Students from higher socio-economic classes are more likely to opt for Transition Year (Jeffers 2002; Smyth, Byrne and Hannan, 2004). Teacher respondents reasoned that low participation rates were linked with the costs of the programme which can be approximately €500 if a student partakes in all the trips and activities. One respondent stated *"Perhaps this*

is a luxury that they cannot afford." The cost of the year in terms of time and finances was stated as a factor by the third year student participants.

Abbon: *I am going into 5th year - not doing TY .*

Cajetan: *An extra year in school*

Baibina: *Too much money needed for trips*

Abbon: *It cost too much and we have to stay another year in the school*

Elana: *My friends don't want to do it because of extra year and I agree*

While there is no definitive break down on the socio-economic backgrounds or ethnic make-up of the 40% of students nationally who undertake the TY Year, it is clear that the majority of the newcomer students at this school site eschew the programme. The view is held by some teachers that for newcomer students arriving into senior cycle with low or no proficiency in English, participation in TY would be *"a great opportunity"* (teacher respondent). A newcomer student who completed the TY year does not agree.

Claudia: *Came to the school three years ago and was put into TY. Did not learn much in TY year. Would not recommend anyone to do it.* (6th Year)

Claudia described being *"put into"* TY by the school authorities – the choice was not hers. A new arrival to the country and to the school, denied a choice, *"put into"* the class without any friendship structure as scaffolding which set her apart from classmates who had established their friendships. As the literature shows and the findings in this study demonstrate, friendship structures for children of migrants are more likely to build up with own nationalities or with other students from an immigrant background. The most telling aspect of her experience was the fact that the school authorities, who may have been well-meaning in their motives, appear to have disempowered the student..

Despite a strong focus on personal and social development and on education for active citizenship (Jeffers 2011), immigrant students do not want to do the optional extra year. That pattern seems to have established itself over the years. Eschewing the year is linked with expense and the extra year in school. The positive benefits both socially and academically that such participation might bring are lost but students don't see it like that. Most do not

want to spend another year at second-level school. The findings on participation among newcomer students in the extra- curricular life of the school will be helpful in gauging the extent to which they are socially integrated and will form the basis of the next section.

5.7 Participation in Extra-curricular Activities

The findings in this case study school indicate that generally participation rates for children of migrants are low.

…the involvement of newcomer students in extra-curricular activities is poor - Sport, Student Council, Bene Merenti (the annual performance concert) – overall the representation of newcomer students in all these activities is extremely poor. (Principal)

As Houston et al. (2005) state social interaction with the local population is important for the process of integration. Participation in sport and extra-curricular activity facilitates 'authentic social engagement' (Devine 2011, p.145) in school and community. Sport, especially football, plays an enormously important role in social inclusion of newcomer students and involvement bestows prestige for some migrant boys (Curry et al. 2011 p.97). Participant 6th year students recognised the benefits of playing sport and representing the school.

Christaldo: *I played football, was on school team.…Yes it was good –another way to make friends and meet Irish students.*

Darius: *I made more friends when I joined the local soccer club and have Irish friends and go to their houses.*

Cassius: *Yes it helps when you get involved in sport and if you represent the school on a team. We find that the Irish are friendly and we have integration in class. We go to parties with Irish people.*

Cassius's comment is quite interesting in that he links integration with being proactively involved and developing a sense of belonging to the school. He points out that integration is occurring at class level but if the student makes the effort to participate in extra-curricular the integration process extends to socialisation. Earlier on in the discussion he pointed out that spending time and communicating in own language on Skype/Facebook and phoning home would not help the student to improve proficiency in host language or to broaden out in friendship formation. According to the school IO a Romanian student was encouraged to

develop his interest in rap music by joining with Irish students who also shared this particular interest. As interaction with Irish students increased he was less inclined towards *"hanging around with Eastern Europeans as now he is totally integrated."* The Principal also referred to that particular student who *"has mixed well with his peers,"* played football on the school team and socialised in "The Square" - a measure of being socially integrated in this case study school (see 5.4).

Directive support from school staff towards social integration did not always result in success according the IO as a student might *"shy out"* of performing in the school musical, for example, if there was nobody else from his/her national group, in the cast.

Parental influence is also a factor. If parents place more value on helping out with the family business or working evenings and weekends for extra money, participation in extra-curricular is not even considered. As most migrant parents are not involved with the school in any significant way, the benefits of extra-curricular involvement may not be a priority. This appears to be the case in relation to Asian and Eastern European families. In relation to *'kids of colour,'* (Banks 2012), parents may fear that their child would be subjected to racial abuse (at matches) and are keen to protect them from that.

The views of the school principal were reflected in the teacher questionnaire findings. 31% of the teachers indicated that participation in extra-curricular activities was *poor* and 17.8% indicated that participation was *very poor* because newcomer students *"rarely participate in sporting teams or team events."*

I train rugby at all levels and no student has expressed an interest in participating. Neither are they interested in participating in other extra-curricular activities like the musical for example. (Teacher respondent)

Other teacher respondents opined that children of migrants *"don't seem to engage with these areas"* as they tend to *"hang out"* and *"stick together"* in preference to *"participating in the wide range of extra-curricular activities"* on offer in the school.

Explanations for low participation rates were offered by a number of teacher respondents. It was suggested that in comparison with local children they are at a *"disadvantage as they are not known for their skills"* and *"may not be inclined"* to push themselves forward or may not be involved in sport or music outside school. Around the school *"no notices of sports and*

clubs in their languages" (teacher), are placed on notice boards and it was suggested that by printing notices in all the newcomer languages that the school could be better at targeting newcomer students when recruiting for teams and extra-curricular participation. Simple, practical interventions like these would contribute towards inclusivity and towards the development of an intercultural atmosphere throughout the school.

5.8 Conclusion

Analysis of the findings was carried out under seven headings which were prioritised by the researcher based on the categorisation of themes in Chapter 4. The themes were dealt with in separate but highly connected sections.

The findings related to English Language Acquisition from the questionnaire respondents, from focus group participants and from interviewees were discussed in section 5.1. Opinions on allocation of government EAL support, apportionment at school level and the sufficiency (or otherwise) of provision were examined. As an important component in the examination of the academic and social integration of newcomer students, acquisition of the host language permeated the subsequent sections in this chapter.

The consequences of persistent absenteeism and truancy (mitching) on the learning process and learning outcomes were analysed in section 5.2. Findings on the reasons for irregular attendance patterns from the students' perspective were discussed together with how school authorities addressed the issue. Aspects of the problem were bound up with the findings on EAL provision and on parental engagement with the school (section 5.3). In section 5.3 the low levels of host language proficiency, low levels of attendance at parent-teacher meetings and the consequences for parents' contribution to their children's academic progress formed part of the discussion in this section. Disempowerment of parents, erosion of cultural capital, and outsider status in relation to knowledge of the education system along with information deficit in relation to the school formed a central part of the analysis.

The question of exclusion manifested itself again in the section on friendship patterns (5.4), where the focus of the analysis was on clustering of students in own nationality groupings or mixed immigrant clusters. Discussion on territorial spaces and why students sought 'ownership' of certain 'desired' spaces, from students own perceptions and from the point of view of staff, formed part of the analysis. The analysis included the role of such groupings as a support for each other in their shared migrant experience. The findings indicated that

socialising in such groups serves as a security among themselves against xenophobic and racist verbal abuse, which is thematic focus of section 5.5. Analysis of the students' narrative on xenophobic /racist comments and taunts during school dominated the discussion in this section. Response to racist incidents both at school and policy at national level are discussed.

The final sections of the chapter comprised an analysis of immigrant student participation in optional curricular (section 5.6) and extra-curricular activities (section 5.7). The financial barrier to participation in TY moved the discussion into the area of disadvantage. The influence of friends and the extra year involved were part of the discussion of the decision – making process. The substantial contribution of participation in TY and sporting /cultural activities to social integration and the question of supportive encouragement and outreach towards students resulted in a noteworthy analysis.

In relation to answering the research question on supports for academic and social integration of newcomer students, the researcher condensed the analysis into four parts, for the purposes of concluding the investigation:

- Acquiescence by school authorities - in relation to non -attendance and to newcomer student grouping
- Tacit acceptance of xenophobic/racist behaviour rather than support against its occurrence
- Exclusion/inclusion by self/by school
- Power

The conclusions reached in the examination of the research question(s) which triggered the investigation into supports for the academic and social integration of newcomer students, will be discussed in the next chapter under the four headings as outlined.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

6.0 Introduction

The final chapter of this research thesis provides an opportunity to return to the research question and assess the findings that emerged, through the use of a single and bounded study to look at the factors that impact on academic and social integration of migrant students in an Irish 2nd level school. The relevance of this research cannot be overestimated bearing in mind that the rapid changes in the make-up of Irish society are replicated all over the country. While this particular study does not lay claims to anything other than a small- scale study in one particular setting, the lessons from the research can have much wider implications for Irish schools.

This concluding chapter begins with a discussion on the limitations of confining the research sample to one school and being an insider researcher in that one particular school. Except for four external interviews, the research for this doctoral thesis was conducted in one school. However, the school in question is a very large school with an open enrolment policy. At the time of the research process it was the only second level school serving a large catchment area which has experienced a sharp increase in overall population in the past decade. Limiting the study to one school resulted in greater depth thus adding rigour to the inquiry. The findings in this study mirror some of the key messages from the literature review on the social and academic integration of newcomer students in the Irish education system.

The case study method enabled the researcher to delve deep into the nuances of the undercurrents of the relationships, examine a number of particularities related to the particular context and provide a detailed contextualised analysis of the contemporary phenomena (Yin 2009) in the particular school. Thus the conditions were right for the exploration of the complex issues that emerged. Critics of the case study method claim that the examination of a small number of cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generalizing of findings. Stake (2002) argues that case studies need not make any claims about the generalisation of their findings, but rather that they describe the cases that they have studied properly, by giving a rich and detailed portrait of the context.

A number of practical advantages to being an insider researcher regarding flexibility and timing when engaged in the data collection process helped this researcher to have a greater understanding and knowledge of the research site and its context. While the knowledge of the site facilitated the data collection processes the researcher needed to distinguish between his role in the school and his role as researcher and he needed to maintain the researcher role with colleague respondents and student participants. As an insider he was liable to make assumptions or suffer from biased perceptions at the outset and in the analysis of the findings. Every effort was made to monitor this process and the interventions of an outside research supervisor together with a wide ranging literature review and an acknowledgement of the possible issues that might arise around insider research ensured in as far as possible that the research presented for review is free of bias. The Voices of the students are present throughout the research and also the Voices of the external experts support the validity of the research.

It is a central contention of this study that the extent to which migrant students are academically and socially integrated in their school has a significant bearing on their scholastic achievement and that schools have a critical role to play in creating the conditions and supports that facilitate the attainment of educational potential. For the purpose of this study the researcher adopted the term integration, as embodying the whole person and the full breadth of their academic and social integration experience including student wellbeing.

Educational theorists and researchers have identified a wide range of needs relating to immigrant students in education and posit the view that schools need to pro-actively support newcomer students to navigate both the academic and the social terrain of school life. Education systems must create conditions for supporting equality of opportunity, social integration, understanding and respect (Watt 2006). In his endeavour to answer the research question on how newcomer students could be supported in their academic and social integration at second level, the educational needs of the students' required detailed exploration.

The direct alignment between English language proficiency, classroom learning, socialisation and communication with parents emerged among the main themes from the extant literature.

As the investigation moved into findings and analysis stages, the interconnectedness between the different findings became apparent.

The case study method had a distinctive place in this research which sought to capture causal processes (Cronbach, 1980; Connolly 1998; Patton 2002). For example findings on issues related to attendance patterns, absenteeism and truancy reflected and intersected with the findings about friendship patterns and parental engagement. Generally, academic and social integration were inextricably bound up with issues of exclusion, disadvantage and power and it became apparent that in relation to supporting the various groups of students, school management and teachers negotiated the power structures in the school in a manner which may not always lead to positive education outcomes for all. Schools are ultimately about supporting the young person to attain their potential and derive the maximum benefit from the education system and when this fails to materialise for groups such as children of migrants, a performance gap develops between cultural minorities and their peers.

In this chapter the researcher condenses the key findings into four themes which capture the essence of the inquiry. How timetabling and lack of outreach to parents can exclude immigrant students and their parents/guardians is discussed in section 6.1. Exclusion through xenophobia, racial taunts and prejudicial commentary is discussed in 6.2. How attendance patterns are dealt with by school authorities is discussed in 6.3 and in 6.4. The researcher marshals the substance of the findings into a discussion on how state policy and school organisation can contribute to the perpetuation of the inclusion exclusion dynamic. The merits of transferability to a larger case study are discussed in section 6.5 while section 6.6 deals with the national need for longitudinal studies on immigrant children in the Irish education system.

6.1 Exclusion

The findings from this study demonstrated that segregated scenarios developed within the school due to organisation of EAL classes in the same room for all children of migrants throughout the school. This practice which resulted in their segregation was eventually discontinued at the instigation of the integration officer. Since the loss of that post of responsibility within Irish schools in general and this Case Study in particular, other practices need to be re-considered such as consigning immigrant students to 'study' classes while peers study Irish. Students are not attaining maximum benefit from a 'study' class where a staff

member is placed in a supervisory rather than a pedagogical role. The school could improve educational outcomes for newcomers by utilising this particular class period to enhance English language skills particularly for recent arrivals who due to cutbacks are not afforded any EAL class at senior cycle. The denial of support confers disadvantage on to the student by the school and the school (inadvertently) becomes an agent in the perpetuation of disadvantage. As competence in English, the language of instruction results in the accomplishment of more favourable educational outcomes, the lack of English language support means that the student is disadvantaged at both classroom and conversational interaction level.

In its failure to support the academic and social integration of children of migrants, the school reproduces structural inequalities as postulated by Bernstein (1975) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977).

Despite the myriad opportunities for all parents to engage with the school, the home school relationships between the school and immigrant parents appear to be non-existent. On the school's part there appears to be a complete absence of any strategy to address the barriers that prevent immigrant parents from engaging with their child's school, thus signalling a weak commitment on the side of the school to home school engagement with the newcomer parent.

The positioning of most migrant families, outside of the culturally valuable knowledge and social norms of the school, results in a discontinuity between school and home. Lacking this culturally valuable knowledge and not having internalised the social norms of the school and the society that it is rooted in, places the immigrant parent in the 'outsider' position (Mitchell, 2008; Schofield 2006), from which it is difficult to negotiate the road map to educational success. In contrast to the parents of the Irish children, many of whom are highly engaged with the schools systems and some exert a considerable degree of influence and power over the policies and practices of the school, the immigrant parent is positioned at a considerable distance from the epicentre of power in the school.

The disadvantaged position results in power differentials between parents and school which in effect excludes the parents from playing a participatory role in their child's education. Parallel to the immigrant parents' experience of exclusion is the immigrant students' vulnerability to xenophobic and racist bullying which according to (Molcho, Kelly and Nic

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Gabhainn 2011; Curry et al. 2011) is likely to happen to minority language students as a result of power differentials related to low levels of English Language proficiency.

6.2. Xenophobia/Racism

Racism and xenophobia are interrelated concepts that unfairly disadvantage the newcomer student. The distress caused by racist and xenophobic verbal abuse adversely effects student wellbeing and impacts on academic progress and socialisation patterns. In this case study school, reported cases were dealt with in line with school policy but the verbal taunts and pejorative comments carried on unchecked. The passivity of the school authorities in the face of xenophobic and racist abuse contributes to an acceptance of the behaviour. As in the conclusions drawn regarding language provision in 6.1, the lack of broader interventions against racism and xenophobia pinpoints the school's failure to acknowledge and address the issues which arise in a culturally diverse student population.

6.3 Acquiescence by school authorities

A lack of determined initiatives to address the high levels of absenteeism and truancy among children of migrants was evident in the findings. The causes of the irregular attendance patterns such as low proficiency in English leading to unsatisfactory classroom experiences for the students were not addressed by the school. The existing timetable structure in place from the beginning of the school year is adhered to without any adjustment for individual needs as they arise throughout the year. The 'one size fits all' approach to EAL provision fails many immigrant students.

Poor attendance patterns by newcomer students were treated differently to similar patterns by the native students and in a way that contravened both school and state policies on attendance. It is possible to deduce that the school attached less value to the attendance of the newcomer student than it did to the native child and did not apply the managerial time and resources to tackling the issue of poor attendance among the newcomer students. The failure by school authorities to follow up on absences and impose sanctions when migrant students circumvent the school rules, amounts to discrimination and is tantamount to endorsing absenteeism without explanation. In cases where English language proficiency is low among parents, the child may be selective about school matters and the non-existence of translation or interpreting support exacerbates the information deficit problem for the parents. The

school's inaction on the communication deficit with immigrant parents facilitates the continuation of unsatisfactory levels of attendance.

6.4. Power

The discontinuity between school and home was evidenced in this case study school in the low levels of engagement between school and home. As many are positioned outside the school system they rely on their children for information. From this marginal position the immigrant parent is confirmed in their status as an 'outsider' (Mitchell, 2008) and often has less knowledge than others of the 'invisible codes of power' (Carreon, Drake, &Barton, 2005), which are embedded and pervasive in the school culture and structures.

The state has failed in relation to empowering immigrant parents leaving them estranged alienated and powerless (Schofield 2006). This weak home-school relationship stymies the school and home relationship and increases the marginal position of the parent. Lack of support from the state, for immigrant parents' English language acquisition should not mean that the school has no obligation towards bridging the gap between school and home. Individual schools must support the child's education in every possible way and enabling the parent to participate on an equal basis, is part of this case study school's responsibility. A number of questions about the effectiveness of the communication between school and home need to be addressed by the school. Has the school done enough to ensure that all parents receive the notifications? Has the school addressed the issue of low rates of attendance of newcomer parents at parent-teacher meetings? Since the loss of the Integration Officer middle management post in 2010, due to DES cutbacks is there any follow up with parents who do not or cannot attend the parent-teacher meetings?

Power at school level resides primarily with the Board of Management, the principal and the school's management team. To serve the needs of a diverse student population the overarching vision, values and policies radiating from the school's power centre must be rooted in a robust commitment to equality of opportunity for all students. School leaders are in a powerful position of creating and articulating a vision for a school that is underpinned by a set of core values. The values become embedded in the school ethos through policy and practice. If the school leadership fails to ensure that the various sub-groups in the school have equality of access and opportunity they are in effect de-valuing the status of students who belong to certain sub-groups. The de-valued status of the sub-group will impact on how

they are perceived and treated by the components of the school community such as the teachers and the students. Failure to pro-actively attend to the education wellbeing of the newcomer sub-group of students could be construed as a dereliction of duty on the part of school leadership. It is evident from the findings in this study that the notion of equality has not permeated some of the core practices in relation to attendance, addressing racial and xenophobic bullying, supports for curricular access, parental engagement and encouragement and support for participation in the extra-curricular programmes. Failure by the school to address these issues as they emerge undoubtedly impacts in a negative way and places immigrant students in a disadvantaged position in relation to social and academic integration.

State policy was sluggish in relation to language support provision (2.3.1), even during the economic boom. Government budget cuts impacted disproportionally on disadvantaged groups including children of migrants. This was evident in the case study school as cuts to English language provision deprived students in senior cycle of EAL instruction. Children of migrants, many of whom have already experienced disadvantage are facing life in reduced family economic circumstances and in schools where expenditure cuts have impacted adversely on language provision. The loss of the middle management position and financial cutbacks to SCP resulted in less supports for the children of migrants. Low proficiency in the host language and low level of support silences the voice of the migrant and positions most migrant families outside of the culturally valuable knowledge and social norms of the school. There are a further two issues that need to be addressed before the conclusion of this research thesis, namely the transferability of these findings to a larger Case Study and the need for longitudinal studies that would follow the progress of the migrant student over a longer period of time. These types of interventions would give an opportunity for the DES and other state bodies to monitor the impact of schooling on migrant students and perhaps highlight the need for vigilance if we are as a nation to avoid the mistakes that have been made in other countries. In a time of economic downturn, this may appear like a big Ask; however failure to do so may have long term implications that in the end could prove much more costly for the State.

6.5 Transferability to a Larger Case Study

The findings clearly demonstrate the myriad needs of newcomer students, the diminution of state allocation and the low prioritisation attached to the children of migrants in terms of the

application of resources. The study would be highly amenable to transferability to a larger case study. A larger case study encompassing a larger sample could examine in greater depth the salient issues that emerge from this study regarding academic underachievement, exclusion (students and parents), segregation (including self-segregation), participation rates in sport and cultural activity, xenophobia/ racism, student wellbeing, teacher training on cultural/linguistic diversity and how the power dynamics of state and school management do not always play out in favour of the educational wellbeing of the immigrant student. The model used in this Case Study could be replicated either at National level or in cluster of schools to allow for further discussion and debate on the findings. At a minimum the findings of this case study need to be presented to the wider education community.

6.6 The Need for Longitudinal Studies

The indications are clear that children from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds are now an important part of the Irish education system. Longitudinal studies of a larger cohort of students would enrich our understanding of the educational wellbeing of immigrant children. The findings in this study signal the need for a longitudinal study that would span the entire educational journey from enrolment to exit and beyond. The longitudinal study could interrogate more fully the pertinent issues that emerged from this research. These issues include:

- Scholastic achievement
- Attendance patterns
- Retention
- Participation in curricular and extra-curricular
- Inclusion/exclusion
- Xenophobia/racism
- Parental engagement
- Progression

The findings from longitudinal studies would raise the profile of the immigrant student population bringing the relevant issues to the attention of educators and the general public. The findings would inform policy and practice that would enable our education system to be more effective in meeting the academic and social integration needs of newcomer students.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher condensed the key findings into four themes: exclusion, xenophobia/racism, acquiescence by school authorities and power and discussed each in four separate sections 6.1 - 6.4).

In recognition of the limitations of confining the investigation to a case study of one particular school carried out by an insider researcher, the merits of transferability to a larger case study were iterated in 6.5. A cogent argument of the need for longitudinal studies on the basis of the findings excavated from this study was set out in 6.6. As the research concludes, the task still remains to bring the findings to a wider audience. As a nation we purport to cherish all of our children equally. The research brings this statement into question in relation to at least one setting, hampered as it is by economic constraints and sometimes short -term solutions on the part of the State. Our immigrant students and their parents deserve better.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview with an external School Completion Programme (SCP) Coordinator 2009

Interviewer: What issues are emerging for migrant families in the area, particularly in relation to educational access?

SCP Coordinator: The numbers of non-Irish settling in this area (North-West Inner City, Dublin) has increased considerably over the past three years and integration of these new communities became an issue. The School Completion Programme decided at a meeting that something needed to be done in order to help integration. As a result a working group was set up, consisting of education providers – home-school liaison teachers, Dublin Inner City Partnership (DICP) representatives and North West Inner City Networks (NWICN).

Interviewer : What strategies did the working group adopt*?*

SCP: The DICP coordinator suggested that an application be made for a School- Cultural Mediation Programme initially for a translation/interpretation service-translation for school documents and interpretation for school meetings-parent-teacher meetings. An advisory group was set up consisting of an academic from Youth and Community NUI Maynooth and an EFL teacher with connections to St. Patricks College, Drumcondra.

Int. How was the project funded?

Funding came from Pobail and was given for about a year but it was sought for 3 years. The coordinators role was to secure ongoing funding.

How did the project progress?

An advertisement was placed for the position of School-Cultural Mediator as opposed to " A Coordinator of Translation/Interpretation."

That decision was the result of a body of research which was done by people on the Advisory Committee, which was one of the best that I have ever seen. It was focussed and it was well

peopled and focussed on a deeper cultural programme. Funding was secured for one and a half years. The coordinators role was to source translators, create a database of voluntary and paid translators and interpreters, provide training and set up training in accordance with best practice. The translators would work on school documents. Interpreters would work with parent-school meetings and the drive to involve parents would include breakfast groups for parents. The plan also included the establishment of cultural mediation for psychological assessments (which didn't happen due to financial constraints). A conference was held as part of the planning stage and people came in from France who had a longer history of in-migration and had experienced the riots.

Interviewer: Can you outline the involvement of SCP in the project?

We were involved from the beginning because we are linked to ten schools in the area. Essentially we set up the programme. It was done for that (school)cluster-it was a match, a fit. Part of the plan was that the School Cultural Mediation Programme (SCMP) worked alongside the SCP.

Did this work.? What were the outcomes?

Very well and it was all very positive. A database of voluntary translators and interpreters was built up. It was a very exciting time for Interculturalism. When funding ran out the job of coordinator went. In order to complete the work of building the database, an interim coordinator was employed for 6 weeks.

Where does the SCMP project go from here?

The project will continue with me as the contact person for the volunteers. The volunteers will work through the SCP. That agreement was made at the last meeting and it was agreed that SCP would be a "nest" for SCMP. Most of the volunteers are parents and they can see the direct benefits for themselves and their children as they become more involved with the school, with the community- gives them a voice in the school. there is a lot of goodwill out there.

What other interventions does SCP have for newcomer students?

As SCP brief is to break the cycle of poor attendance and underachievement and we would look at the history of families in the area, who have a history of early school leaving. Names are identified as early as pre-school and passed on to us. School principals are able to identify at risk students, based on family history.

With newcomers the challenge was to attract the parents. the children can adapt but a division between the parents and children emerged and in a minority of cases the newcomer child was at a disadvantage when the parent could not engage with the school.

Home –school community liaison do the link-up with parents and would meet regularly. SCP work directly with HSCL personnel.

Where do you see the greatest needs in relation to the education of newcomers

The need for parental contact with the school is very important and we have addressed that in this area. I believe that all newcomers could do with more language support.

Thanks C……. for the interview

Appendix 2

Transcript of Interview with Integration Officer (IO), Monday 21st. September 2009

At the outset the interviewer (I) thanked the interviewee [School Integration Officer (IO)] for agreeing to participate in the research and clarified issues of confidentiality and anonymity in relation to the process.

Interviewer (I): Would you like to begin by briefly describing your post and how it came about.

Integration Officer (IO): When I came back from my career break Mr. P. (Principal) asked me if I would take on the responsibility of looking after the non national students- students for whom English was not their first language. The title it has been given is Integration Officer and what it basically involves is assessing their levels of English, putting them into EFL classes at their appropriate level-we tend to do a lot of extra classes at the start of the year..three classes a day try and bring up their level of English so that they learn something in the classroom I also encourage the foreign students to get involved in school activities.

Interviewer (I): Ok …What do you think of the supports that are in place for newcomer students, this year?

 IO: They haven't cut back very much. They have cut back somewhat on funding for EFL. We tested the students according to government levels..if they attain a certain level, no more EFL classes provided. A student is supposed to get 2 years of EFL support when they come to the country and we find most of them have not attained an acceptable level of English even after 2 years

 Int: In your experience, does every newcomer student who comes into the secondary school here, need language support?

IO: It depends on how long they are in the country. We have some students who would have come quite young and have spent some years in Primary school and they are fine. We usually find that students arrive in the country and start secondary school they don't tend to make the same level of progress because they tend to congregate in groups of students from

other classes and other years who speak their same language-Polish or whatever, and stay in that group…

I: ok

IO: …whereas it seems that when they are in primary school where they are in the same class all the time, they tend to make a greater effort and their English improves

I: Okay So you are touching on issues of integration there where students tend to stay with students from their own country or who speak their own language- could you talk more about that in relation to this particular school.

IO: We have found that in many ways the EFL classes have created a kind of ghetto and physically corridor 1 (one) where the EFL classes used to go ahead. The students made that their own. That's where they met at break-time, lunchtime and that's where they did all their socialising just among other non English speaking students and despite our best effort we couldn't dig them out of there to mix with the other students so that room is now actually closed off

I: Right

….and we no longer have an identifiable EFL room for that purpose because we didn't want it to become like a ghetto.

I: Ok

And also**../**

I: So when did you change that room then? This year?

Last year

I: Oh last year

IO: ..but you still find they congregate in the corridor outside the door of that room That became their territory and I suppose they felt safe there. They are with others who are from Russia or Polish. You would see brothers and sisters meeting up there and giving each other support.

Yeah

 ..but we couldn't get them into the canteen or ' the square' where all the others hung out

I: Right Yeah, And could you give me a general rundown on the type of other newcomer students. You mentioned East Europeans. What other international students do we have here?

IO: Portuguese, Pakistani, oh we have 17 nationalities…a lot of the new Eastern European countries

I: Yeah

Portugal, Spain… as I said Brazil…mm.. those would be our main ones

I: And…integration between those nationalities. Is that happening at all ?

On a very small level but you do tend to see the Portuguese and the Brazilians hanging around together because Portuguese is their common language

I: The common language

Yes the common language

So the common language seems to be the main driving force ?

(pause)

Is that as a challenge, to get them out of their own group?

Otherwise their English won't improve and I don't think it is going to help their integration in any way…staying ghettoised

Yeah Ok (pause) Have you any examples of positive aspects of this whole phenomenon of newcomer students…things that were successful in relation to integration, maybe?

Yes there was one chap from _____ and he was interested in Music so we got him involved in a whole rap thing so himself and an Irish chap started doing rap together so now he is totally integrated. You don't see him hanging around with Eastern Europeans as now he is totally integrated

When you say 'we' who are you referring to?

The Music Department, because of the interest that S_____ (boys name) had in Music I pushed him in that direction. Now I tried to push others in the direction of getting involved in the school musical and even when they go to audition and are given a part then they just back out and don't go to the rehearsals.

Have you any idea why that happens?

Well two reasons. One they like to be with you know a friend , which is common among Irish students too and they find that they may be the only East European in the cast…they often shy out because of that. There is another factor, I found. There is a very strong ethic among the parents. Most of the parents I found do not value extracurricular activities...you're in school to learn and why would you give up time when you could be working and earning money and they really do not see the value....there's one chap, Pakistani, and I was pushing him to get involved in the local Soccer Club

Yeah

And his dad wasn't having any of it. This was not good.

Really? Why?

He wasn't too sure about what type of students he'd be mixing with. He had fears about that. Also the work ethic. His dad has a stall and felt that his son should be working with him on that market. He should be studying because his dad has hopes of him becoming a doctor the whole playing…soccer, you know, didn't come into his priority list at all

You're talking now about their lives outside of the school –how does that impact on their lives within the school?

That particular family suffered greatly in the estate that they were in, a council estate where they lived and they had faeces pushed through the letter box and they suffered a lot of abuse

Abuse?

Yes.. racist abuse and as a result they closed in very much and again they did not want their son playing soccer with some of the boys from the estate.

Yeah?

I was trying to persuade them that this would be a good thing for integration   but they felt that these (the boys) weren't very nice people

Yeah   obviously you put a lot of effort into making contact with parents. How did you find that?

It varies. I found the _____and the _____ very open…and coming to see me quite a lot..if they have a problem they will come to the school and ask for me.

Oh right

And if they're enrolling somebody in the school they will come to see me. I have a good relationship with them.

Very good, yeah

The Eastern Europeans, I find…. there's a_____ian family who are fantastic like that. They come in for help with children allowance forms, they're very good and they communicate very well with us..depends on the individual family some bring in an interpreter

From their own country?

From their own country…. Some are very positive in their communication with me. I help them overcome any hurdles they have

  others I went along to a local meeting where we had the local garda. Integration officer, social workers and various members of the immigrant community and I was quite shocked with a lot of negativity saying that in school nobody would talk to their children and that they were isolated whereas I have seen it from the other side- the kids wouldn't talk to anybody

Right

….and were ghettoising themselves. I tried to get the idea across that it was a two way thing because I did see Irish children making an effort because I told them to make the effort to include them and they were rebuffed. So your average teenager is not going to try a second time…. ' I did ask her did she want to join but she just looked at me and walked away' Irish students are very open, German students as well… they just get involved and after a while the students forget about their nationality because they're involved in everything

Whereas a lot of the_____(names nationality) remain cold don't want to get involved and end up then with someone from their own country in the class and not integrating despite the best efforts of the kids. We have a problem there that I haven't been able to solve where from the outside students and their families will say that nobody will involve them. From the inside I have students saying I tried and they don't want to get involved….despite putting all the supports in place…

What about Parent-Teacher meetings in general?

Usually they don't come. None of them. I translated and we put stuff in writing you know I made out a report sheet before the parent-teacher meeting i got a sheet for teachers to fill out so that they could explain all to the parents. The teachers had it all ready and the parents didn't come in. So I collected the sheets from the teachers that had done it and sent it out home to the parents but I didn't get any feedback from it. You know when I asked about it, it was dismissed as just another communication from the school. They won't come in. If you have a problem with a student and you ask them to come in. They won't come in.

Right, what do you mean by a problem?

It could be a behavioural problem and one big problem we have is students mitching class

Ok. Could you tell me more about that?

There is a high level of mitching among some students . They use the excuse of EFL If they are found on the corridor they will say they were at an EFL class. If they are absent from a class they will tell their teacher they had at an EFL class. Now we have all the paperwork in place and the teacher can check any time but if you have thirty kids in the class, somebody comes back and they say they were at EFL ..you know, you have eight classes in the day..you

haven't the time or the energy to actually pursue it. So I try to get the message across to the teachers that they are not supposed to be out of the class. Full stop.

Mm.

At the moment now they are having it (EFL) during Irish class and we have that up and running , in order to try to get them into a routine of going to all classes. We had one _____(nationality) chap who decided there were some subjects he just didn't want to do you would find him hiding in the toilets and when I frogmarched him down to his Woodwork class where he was supposed to be the teacher said 'I haven't seen him for weeks'………called in the parents who said he didn't like the subject..so, you know

Mm

We would phone the parents and oftentimes they are at work ..they all have mobile numbers and I think that sometimes when the school number comes up they don't answer it. Yes, or if they answer they will say "I cannot come in. I am working." You bend over backwards ……sometimes they say it's because they do not speak good English…but other times it's that they are just not interested.

And is this issue prevalent throughout all the years?

It's Junior cycle

Yeah?

Junior cycle I would say

How do students fare in Senior Cycle?

I would, yes, they are more settled because I think any of them who are not interested in school will have left and got a job. They ones who are still in school (at Senior Cycle) are interested.

Would you say that there is a dropout rate?

Not alarmingly high. It's just I think if they come to the country over the age of 15 or 16 they tend not to come into school. No there is no significant dropout rate. …except you would

have a certain element, some of them, the older ones I think there is some kind of scam going on…they spend a month here and go back over to _____for a month or whatever,

Right, and have you come across many cases of that?

I can think of two off the top of my head

Does that disrupt their education ?

Yes

Would they be Junior or Senior, do you know?

Senior…there's one chap last year..just couldn't pin him down and then they kept changing address. Then it just happened I met the person who was renting the house to this family and that was the only way I could find them . They were just stunned that I found them.

Did you go out to the house?

I did go out to the house. This chap was supposed to be doing his Leaving Cert and wasn't coming to school.…so I went out to the house…

And what kind of a response did you get?

Shock. The Mum was there…very negative..i was saying I was worried about this boy who was doing his Leaving Certificate there … and was lying in bed

What about attitude to education?

It's very hard to generalise. There is one _____family and they come to the school. They are so positive.. hardworking. They are tremendous and they go to such lengths as they bring back presents from _____ for me..they're really good and the _____ another nationality) like that would give me Christmas presents and things because they appreciate anything you do. On the other hand the vast majority of them have a negative attitude towards education, towards teachers, towards the state a lot of the time. They want to collect their children's allowance and any other benefit they can get but they're not willing to push their children into school or put in the work. ….so it's hard to generalise …it's in individual families….

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…that have a particular attitude (pause) . but then I suppose it is the same with Irish families…mitching classes when they don't want to do it and on the other hand when they can't understand what is being said.

We got the teachers to write out a set of vocabulary for their subjects..Science teachers, Geography teachers…. Have fed into the EFL teachers the subjects they are covering and the key words the students need to know and EFL teachers will do that but again there's not enough two-way traffic…teachers are under pressure. They will do it once maybe,

"I'm doing this chapter and this is what you need"

 it's very hard following up on teachers… "What are you doing now?"

Teachers are very busy and with the best will in the world they feel that they are covering stuff in class and they're putting the words on the board and explaining them and you know students might not take them down.

Can you tell me about the EFL team. How are they selected? Are they EFL qualified?

Those working in the area are EFL qualified. We have one main EFL teacher.. she.. her hours are based on EFL allocation and she does mainly EFL. We have a team of teachers who are EFL qualified, with experience of teaching English abroad in Spain or Germany and they will do a few hours per week. We meet once a week as a team and make sure that we have plenty of textbooks, tapes..workbooks

Apart from class materials and class preparation would you have discussions on the other issues that are going on (issues) that you just mentioned.?

Yes

And where does that take you?

That takes me to pursuing the student individually..I would pursue each case.

And are they more or less the same issues each year, in your experience?

With students?

Yes

They tend to be the same students that we have to pursue for mitching

Right

Because anything that becomes recurring with the students we tend to be able to deal with those

Right..

As a team we come up with solutions, usually we overcome these problems

Are you aware of any after school supports?

There's a homework club here in the school and I send them to that and ….   children really benefit from that

Would you recommend that all of them go?

I would recommend it to all of them. I have very close contact with the school completion co-ordinator (SCP) and we work closely together and anybody who is willing to go in she will take.

Have you any awareness of transfer to third level?

No, not at the moment ..those who have done their Leaving Cert., I haven't followed up where they've gone afterwards. It's an area we could look at. I've been so busy looking after them in here I haven't had time to look over the parapet.

Transcript of recorded interview with School Completion Programme (SCP) co-ordinator September 2009

Interviewer (I.) **What SCP supports can newcomer students access in this school?**

SCP: We organise a lunchtime club in the school where we set up a space for table tennis. We have summer camps- some take parents and we offer family support to people experiencing difficulties. We have also set up a transfer programme to secondary school which we offer to all 6th class students in the seven SCP feeder primary schools

I: Do all newcomer students access the homework club the after-school support, in this school?

SCP: Not all of them. There's a problem with those reliant on school transport, they have to get their buses home. Others don't need the homework club because they are able to do their homework at home in a quiet environment

Have you any contact with people who organise homework clubs at Primary level?

Yes. We used to run a primary homework club here in this community school and children of foreign nationals used to come down to us then for an hour in the evening. They were in fourth and fifth class then. They stayed with us and are now in fifth year.

So they stayed with you right through?

Yes…Pakistani students.

What kind of support do they get at their homework club?

They get help with a number of subjects-Maths, Irish, Spanish, English and we are not able to provide support in some subjects like Technology or Woodwork. If there is a query we will try to track down a Woodwork teacher if one is still available.

A lot of them are there for a reason and may need a lot of help in Maths. In the early days when they came to us in the Primary Homework Club they needed help in Irish and English mainly.

How do you select the students for the homework club or is there a referral system?

We have a target group from primary. We have a list of people when they come into first year and we invite them along to the homework club.

Who draws up the list?

They don't always take us up on it and then we get referrals from year heads and class tutors and class teachers people who come to light when a student notes in their journal about not having homework done or if they are just struggling in class, they come along.

Ok could you tell me something about the personnel in the Homework club, who help you run it?

They are qualified teachers and SNA's (Special Needs Assistants). We try to employ people who are experienced in particular subjects….like a Maths teacher is invaluable in the homework club…and there is a teacher of Irish and there is an SNA who lived in Spain who is fluent in Spanish which can be another difficult subject for students.

Right. Do you have Brazilian students here?

Yes. They speak Portuguese. We had a special homework club here one year run by Ms------- who speaks Spanish and Portuguese, for two Portuguese students here and we set up a homework club for them along with the Brazilians When they come first they had trouble getting on the school bus as it was full.

How did SCP help solve this?

I put pressure on the principal to ring the School Bus Depot Headquarters and it was resolved.

How long do students usually avail of the homework club supports?

It varies. We have two students who were with us from primary and are now in fifth year. Sometimes their brother drops in for help in a specific area. A student spends time with us and then goes to night study. That is unusual. But they also use us for other things..if they want to change the class teacher or if another family move into the town and wants to get a

child into primary school and various matters like that…cultural issues. We have the role of playing advocate to them and help them out in the school environment. They attend every day of the week and if children do not attend we ring home and they lose their place.

Do you think the Homework Club helps them with general integration in the school?

I think they still stay with their own friends and I don't think there is really that much integration.

Yeah?

And it's cultural, students here who are going into fifth year…a lot of their year group are beginning Transition Year (TY). Certain religious groups do not do TY and many newcomer students cannot afford TY. The cost is 500 euro if you go on all the trips.

So they are with different people and in some way it helps them to integrate but they don't mix to a great extent with other students …outside the school.

Do they mix with other Irish children or with other nationalities?

With Irish children. These are three children I am talking about. There are others who do mix. I see them at lunchtime with the Irish children.

Those students you are talking about are in the homework club?

One girl isn't. I'm keeping an eye on her around the school I see her with the other Irish kids.

What other SCP supports are in place?

The lunchtime club – games but the _____ students (names the nationality) take over the table tennis tables and do not mix.

As SCP coordinator are you involved in out of school activities like holiday supports. Can you tell me something about the out of school programmes which you run?

We run a cookery camp in the summer and it is for people who are going to transfer in September, we have a number of sixth class students mixed in with students from first, second and third. Three _____ girls came to the cookery camp the summer before last

Okay

And they have specific requirements around food. The cookery tutor used to ring them the night before and tell them we're making this, so they would bring in their own. That was a way of getting around that issue, without embarrassment, in a way that nobody noticed.

How long did the camp go on for?

Just for a week

A week

…and it gets them used to being with the older students

Is there anything else you would like to say about SCP supports for newcomer/ international students?

This year I have a student mentor and she is helping students to settle into second level and we came across a family who seem to be living in poverty and they may be returning to their own country and we can help out with lunches for them by making arrangements with the school canteen, second-hand uniforms and second hand books picked up around the school that we can give to students as well. The mentor can check in and out in the school, you know, not in an intrusive way…to see are they settling down

…and is there anything else you would like to say (about supports)?

If we had more funding…we could provide more services.

Okay..has funding stayed more or less the same?

No there have been a few cutbacks and there is the danger of further cutbacks and that will affect our supports for international students.

Pilot questionnaire on Supports for Newcomer Students (*international students, children of migrants)* at Second-level

Please indicate your role (e.g. teacher, year head…) and answer the following questions:

Role:

_____

_____

1. What is the student population of the school?   _____

2. What are the numbers of newcomer students (*international students/children of immigrant families)* in the school? _____

3. What interventions/supports are in place, exclusively for the newcomer students, in the school?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Does the school engage with the parents of the newcomer children?

Yes   No

☐   ☐

5. If so, in what manner does the school engage with parents of newcomer children?

Formal   Informal   Both

☐   ☐   ☐

Comment:

_____

_____

_____

6 What, positive aspects, in relation to the integration of the newcomer students, are emerging

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7 What challenging aspects, in relation to the integration of the newcomer students are emerging

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Any other comments:

_____

_____

_____

Pilot questionnaire on Supports for Newcomer Students (*international students, children of migrants*)at Second-level

Please indicate your role (e.g. teacher, year head…) and answer the following questions:

Role:

_____

_____

1. What is the student population of the school?   _____

2. What are the numbers of newcomer students (*international students/children of immigrant families)* in the school?   _____

3. What interventions/supports are in place, exclusively for the newcomer students, in the school?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Does the school engage with the parents of the newcomer children?

Yes   No

          ☐   ☐

5. If so, in what manner does the school engage with parents of newcomer children?

Formal   Informal   Both

   ☐   ☐   ☐

Comment:

_____

_____

_____

6. What, in your opinion, are the emergent-positive aspects, in relation to the integration of the newcomer students, in the school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What are the emergent-challenging aspects, in relation to the integration of the newcomer students in the school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Any other comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Pilot questionnaire Support programmes for newcomer students at second level.

1. How many secondary schools are involved in the programme?

2. What is the overall figure for second – level newcomer students in your target group?

3 Does your programme provide in – school support for newcomer second-level students?

Yes   No

              ☐   ☐

 Comment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Does your programme provide out- of -school support for newcomer students?

Yes   No

                    ☐   ☐

Comment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Does your programme engage with parents of newcomer students?

Yes   No

                    ☐   ☐

Comment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What positive aspects, in relation to the integration of newcomer students in the schools, are emerging?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What challenging aspects, in relation to the integration of the newcomer students, in the schools are emerging?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Does your project employ people from the immigrant community?

Yes   No

☐   ☐

Comment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Pilot questionnaire Support programmes for newcomer students at second level.

Please confine your answers to second-level schools in your programme

1. How many secondary schools are involved in the programme? _____

2. What is the overall figure for second- level newcomer students *(international students /children from immigrant families)* in your programme?

3. Does your programme provide in-school support for newcomer second-level students?

Yes   No

             ☐   ☐

 Comment:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Does your programme provide out-of-school support for newcomer students?

Yes   No

☐   ☐

Comment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Does your programme engage with parents of newcomer students?

Yes   No

☐   ☐

Comment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What, in your opinion, are the emergent-positive aspects, in relation to the integration of newcomer students in your schools?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What are the emergent-challenging aspects, in relation to the integration of the newcomer students, in your schools?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Do you employ any people from the immigrant community, on your programme?

Yes   No

                          ☐   ☐

Comment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Transcript of interview with Attendance Officer in Community school, (Assistant Principal postholder- 'A' post) Sept 2010

Interviewer Could you briefly describe your role?

The remit of the Attendance Officer(A.O.) in the school, is to document the attendance patterns of the students who are under 16

I am researching the attendance record of students in this school, who speak English as a second or another language. I would be interested in hearing your observations about the attendance patterns of children of migrants, for the academic year 2009/2010

Firstly, I would like to say that not all of the international students had poor attendance. Some come to school every day and participate but that (number) is veering towards a minority. I observed a polarisation with many having a poor attendance. The duties of my post involved liaison with the Home school community liaison (HSCL) officer and with year heads. In general, the students showed a casual attitude to attendance and took half days.

I: Yeah?

What struck me most was it seemed to me that year heads and teachers were less likely to follow up on foreign students. "he hardly ever comes in" was a typical response- kind of dismissive in some cases.

Mm

The transient nature of them being here, families moving within the country or between countries

What effects does this have on attendance?

Students are harder to pin down. A teacher meeting a foreign student coming in late or leaving early is less likely to follow it up when student doesn't understand the teachers' questions. They can play the system. They know the system.

Does poor attendance affect integration?

East Europeans cope better socially because they support each other. They speak to each other. They have a street wiseness about them and keep out of trouble. They are rarely in trouble over discipline, don't get suspended over mitching Do teachers or year heads expect them to bring notes? Other Europeans (Spanish, Portuguese) do not have the same coping mechanisms (as East Europeans) and in one case (LP) little was done to help her.

What are the main reasons, in your opinion, for absenteeism among this cohort of students.?

Illness, family events …..check the standard forms for the different categories ..there are seven.

Are cases of chronic absenteeism followed up?

Attendance officers for the area are overworked so follow –up is not done.

Anything else you would like to add?

I recommend that you check the standard forms in the Principal's office, which the A.O.. uses and study the different categories

Appendix 9

Dear Staff members,

I am doing a **doctoral research study** with **Dublin City University (DCU)** on students who speak English as a second or as another language. (newcomer students). I intend to examine both the in-school, after-school/out-of-school provision aimed specifically at newcomer students. In addition I propose to investigate what manner and to what extent the newcomer students access the supports which are available to all students.

I will be surveying all teachers and special needs assistants in the school by distributing a questionnaire.   I appreciate your decision to take about ten minutes out of your busy schedule to fill the questionnaire. I wish to point out that involvement in the research study is voluntary and that the answers will remain anonymous. Findings will be made available to the school and to participants on request.

I also wish to collect data by interviewing members of management, EFL teachers and other teachers whose work brings them into regular contact with students who speak English as a second or as another language (newcomer students). If you would like to participate please let me know. The interview will be recorded or otherwise if you so wish. In the case of the recorded interview the contents will be deleted after the write-up.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

Signed: _____

Seamus O'Connor

Please return completed questionnaire to my post box no. 326 Or to Rm xx

Thank you.

Dear Colleague,

I am doing a research study with **Dublin City University (DCU)** on students who speak English as a second or as another language (newcomer students). I intend to examine both the in-school, after-school/out-of-school provision aimed specifically at newcomer students. In addition I propose to investigate what manner and to what extent the newcomer students access the supports which are available to all students.

I will be surveying all teachers and special needs assistants in the school by distributing a *questionnaire*. I appreciate your decision to take about ten minutes out of your busy schedule to fill the questionnaire. I wish to point out that the answers will remain anonymous and that involvement in the research study is voluntary. Findings will be made available to the school and to participants on request.

I also wish to collect additional data by *interviewing* members of management, EFL teachers and other teachers whose work brings them into regular contact with students who speak English as a second or as another language (newcomer students). If you would like to participate please let me know.

Please return completed questionnaire to my post box no.345

 or to Rm xxx.

Thank you

Signed: _____

Seamus O' Connor

Appendix 10

Questionnaire to staff

1. Newcomer students are supported in the attainment of their academic and social potential in the school

Strongly   agree   don't know   disagree   strongly

 agree   disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. The pattern of attendance among newcomer students in the school is satisfactory.

Strongly   agree   don't know   disagree   strongly

 agree   disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. If you have ticked 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to question 2, please answer the following:

Attendance patterns among newcomer students are characterised by:

(i) Poor punctuality

	Agree	don't know	disagree
	☐	☐	☐

(ii) Early departure

	Agree	Don't know	disagree
	☐	☐	☐

(iii) Unauthorised absence from some class (while marked present on register)

	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
	☐	☐	☐

(iv) Long periods of unexplained absences

	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
	☐	☐	

(v) Truancy (mitching for the complete school day)

	Agree	Don't know	Disagree
	☐	☐	☐

4 Are there **supports** in place in the school to address the issues relating to attendance patterns among newcomer students?

Yes	No	Don't know
☐	☐	☐

If you answered 'Yes' please explain

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Please rate the following, **A,B and C,** in relation to newcomer students.

(1= very good: 2= good: 3= average: 4=poor : 5= very poor)

A. Participation in extra-curricular activities

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
□	□	□	□	□

Comment

_____

_____

_____

Please rate **supports** in the school for newcomer students, in relation to, participation in extra curricular activities.

1	2	3	4	5
□	□	□	□	□

Comment

_____

_____

_____

Reminder re rating values:

(1= very good: 2= good: 3= average: 4=poor : 5= very poor)

B. Take up and completion of Transition Year

1.	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

Please rate **supports** in the school, for newcomer students, in relation to, participation in Transition Year.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. School-parent engagement

1.	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please rate **supports** for newcomer students in relation to school-parent engagement

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Please rate the adequacy of provision of **EFL/EAL** (English as a Foreign language/English as Another language) classes, as a support, for newcomer students.

(1= very good: 2= good: 3= average: 4=poor : 5= very poor)

1.	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Any other comments in relation to the effectiveness (or otherwise), of existing supports and your recommendations.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 11

Questionnaire with amendments *(Q.2 and Q.3)*

1. Newcomer students are supported in the attainment of their academic and social potential in the school

Strongly   agree   don't know   disagree   strongly

 agree   disagree

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.) The criteria used for poor attendance, by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) is absences of 20 days or over, (out of a school year of 167 days). How do you rate the attendance patterns of newcomer students?

Very good   Good   don't know   poor   very poor

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

3. Please rate the following, in relation to attendance patterns of newcomer students.

(1= very good: 2= good: 3= unsure: 4=poor : 5= very poor)

Punctuality

Explanatory notes for absences from school for full day

Explanatory notes for absences from school for part of the day

Explanatory notes for long periods of absences (1 week or over)

4. Are there **supports** in place in the school to address the issues relating to attendance patterns among newcomer students?

Yes   No   Don't know

                       ☐   ☐   ☐

If you answered 'Yes' please explain
_____
_____
_____

5. Please rate the following, **A,B and C,** in relation to newcomer students.

(1= very good: 2= good: 3= average: 4=poor : 5= very poor)

A. Participation in extra-curricular activities

1.   2.   3.   4.   5.

☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Comment
_____

_____

_____

Please rate **supports** in the school for newcomer students, in relation to, participation in extracurricular activities.

   1   2   3   4   5

  ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

Reminder re rating values:

(1= very good: 2= good: 3= average: 4=poor : 5= very poor)

B. Take up and completion of Transition Year

   1.   2   3   4   5

  ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

Please rate **supports** in the school, for newcomer students, in relation to, participation in Transition Year.

   1   2   3   4   5

  ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. School-parent engagement

1.	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please rate **supports** for newcomer students in relation to school-parent engagement

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Please rate the adequacy of provision of **EFL/EAL** (English as a Foreign language/English as Another language) classes, as a support, for newcomer students.

(1= very good: 2= good: 3= average: 4=poor : 5= very poor)

1.	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comment

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Any other comments in relation to the effectiveness (or otherwise), of existing supports and your recommendations.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 12

Dear

I am doing a **doctoral research study** with **Dublin City University (DCU)** on students who speak English as a second or as another language (newcomer students). I intend to examine both the in-school, after-school/out-of-school provision aimed specifically at newcomer students and their parents/guardians.

I wish to point out that involvement in the research study is voluntary and that the answers will remain anonymous. Findings will be made available to the school and to participants on request.

The interview will be recorded, or otherwise if you so wish, after which a   typed transcript will be sent to you for your perusal. In the case of the recorded interview the contents will be erased after the completion of the study.

As your experience in the area of intercultural matters is highly valued, your decision to participate in this study is much appreciated. I look forward to your contribution.

Signed: _____

Seamus O'Connor

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

Appendix 13

Profile of Interviewee

The editor of *Metro Eireann,* Mr.Chinedu Onyejelem, was selected for the following reasons

One of six National Ambassadors appointed for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008

MPhil in Ethnic and Racial Studies from Trinity College Dublin

Publisher of Irelands only multicultural newspaper and author of News in Black and White

Member of the Irish Executive of the National Union of Journalists and represented Ireland in the Black Members Council of the National Union of Journalists, UK and Ireland

ESB/Rehab People of the Year Awards 2006 for his contribution to cross cultural understanding

Ministerial nominee to the Steering Group of The National Action Plan Against Racism

Parent of school going children and is regularly contacted both in a personal and professional capacity by parents looking for help with school issues.

Member of the NGO/Ireland Department of Foreign Affairs Standing Committee on Human Rights

Transcript of interview with former Intercultural Ambassador and current Editor of *Metro Eireann*, also a parent of school-going child

 Interviewer What is your understanding of intercultural education in Ireland?

Basically depends on the angle you take it. Are you talking of people of different cultures coming together in the classroom?

 Two or more children from different backgrounds coming together in a classroom irrespective of where the teacher is from Ireland or not or irrespective of whether it is taught through English or Irish.

Q: What do you think of the dynamic that goes on in a classroom where you have students from different cultures in a classroom in Ireland?

Very enriching you are getting students who are not thinking from the same point. You are getting students who are thinking from all angles .. are thinking outside the box. Some have their own thinking modelled as a result of sometimes problems faced in their own countries, sometimes their rich cultures, in some cases. Intercultural education is a new phenomenon in Ireland .

Interviewer clarifies the term 'newcomer students' and asks Do you think they (newcomer students) face barriers, barriers to learning, barriers to integration.

A. You call them newcomers, some would regard them as children of immigrants while others would regard them as new Irish. But that is not the issue. The issue is how are they being treated and how they are faring. In some cases you know some have learning difficulties.

Okay

Some, as a result of language barriers, others as a result of the kind of relationship they had with their teachers back in their own countries and then you see others while they are still in Ireland facing discrimination from their teachers.

Here in Ireland?

A. Yes here in Ireland that is happening

How does that manifest itself?

A. In many ways you find that a child may come back from school. He or She did not eat their lunch. Okay. And you ask him/her and he/she will tell you that the teacher did not allow him/her to eat his or her lunch. It has not been proven there have been claims of such.

At primary school level?

Yes, and there have been claims that students were not allowed to go to the toilet.

A child coming back from school pressed? And you ask him/her he/she will tell you that the teacher did not allow him/her to use the toilet. I am not sure whether the claims are true or not. I do not know. Some students who are doing very well… But some students acknowledge that there are problems.

Apart from the negative aspects a lot of immigrant children and many children of immigrant parents are experiencing a new system- a system of question and response. They learn that you can ask questions of the teacher. Many students who come from developing countries, were familiar with a (education) system where you do not ask questions and find it extremely difficult to ask questions of the teacher or they were not familiar with a system where you can challenge the teacher. Whereas here if a teacher is wrong the student can say so.

What about pupil – teacher ratio?

It is different and children are very happy with it especially the bright ones.

Is there anything else you want to say about adjustment to our (education) system?

I think that the age of the student, when they enter the system is a significant factor. A younger student will adjust faster than an older student who has to adjust from the system in his/her former country. Also depends on language of the country of origin. If a student comes from a French speaking country, for example, and French is spoken in the home (here in Ireland) and the newspapers, magazines, books and TV channels are in French, in such a case the child will be effected educationally in an English speaking classroom.

You mentioned learning difficulties earlier in the interview. What are your views on the manner in which schools identify and address learning difficulties in relation to newcomer students?

I have seen cases where parents (newcomer) have been told that the children may need extra tuition in Mathematics and English because the student may have been speaking slowly or not responding in the same way as the other students in the class, that was the language barrier and needs to be separated from the other barriers and difficulties-learning difficulties-they should be separated. Sometimes they are not together and it takes a very good teacher to distinguish between the two. (Pause)

…to diagnose where the difficulty is..?

I know a case where a black boy who is very good at languages and Mathematics. The teacher recommended that he take extra lessons and the mother took him to a specialist for extra mural lessons. The tutor, a PhD holder, who gives extra tuition, informed the parents, after a few sessions that their child did not need extra lessons. In fact, he was ahead of students who were senior to him.

How can we as educators, address the issues you just mentioned

Decisions should not be made by one teacher in the school. It should be down to a number of workers in the school, a team of teaching staff who should look at each case before making a decision. Plus the psychologist, also the part played by parents. I was opportuned to go to my boy's – formal parents teachers meeting- one to one- and I had a very good rapport with the teacher. I asked her were there any problems. She said "No" She didn't find anything negative. When he began he was shy but now he is the best person in the class. She was wondering why he was ahead of his classmates. I was telling her that the mother was teaching him every day. When it comes to pronunciation he is ahead and the teacher was happy to hear that, because the mother teaches him ahead.

If the boy was having a problem the teacher could communicate it to the parent "This is the problem he has. Have you noticed it?" The issue could be discussed before the teacher concludes that he needs extra this or extra that. If the teacher makes a decision without discussing it with the parents firstly then this can lead to problems. That (with the parent) is where it (education) has to start.

What about parents of newcomer students and attendance at parent-teacher meetings, generally?

Depending on where they (migrants) come from…sometimes these kind of meetings are not common. In some cases (school-parent contact) is based on an end of year report after which the parent can make contact to discuss the report. Where I come from the family would nominate someone to make contact with the school in order to get information…if there is a problem only then do you (parent) go for a review. The review (parent teacher meeting) is not common like here.

Ok

A lot of immigrants do not understand the system. For instance there was a case in point where parents withdrew their children from school because the school inspector was coming. They didn't know what the school inspector was..thought it was a police inspector. That is their understanding because back in their own country inspector equals police and when police is coming, it is always violent, negative. So some people shy away or run away from that.

So they take the child out for the day?

Yes, due to a misunderstanding of the (Irish) system.

Any other reasons relating to attendance at parent-teacher meetings?

Yes, a lot of immigrant parents, especially those who are working, find it hard to take time off whereas Irish parents will take time off, I think. Back in their countries they have systems , you know, helpers, housemaids, drivers who will go to the parent teacher meeting in place of the parents. But it is gradually changing. There is a period of adjustment. Immigrant parents are getting more involved now.

How do you, as a newcomer parent, find communication with the school?

Because of colonisation and now globalisation, English is spoken in my country along with our own language and I find it easy to communicate with the school, but I consider English to be my second language.

What about parents from countries where English is not an official language.

They are eager to learn the language, but there are not enough supports. The supports which were in place were cut back. Having said that there are conversational English Language classes. In countries like Canada and Australia there is a system where immigrants are strongly encouraged to take lessons in the English language. If I were leader in this country I would insist that newly arrived immigrants must do a course in English. If you look at Sweden and other countries there is a system that helps. It is not discriminating. It helps people to settle down-has different elements-a language element and cultural elements-helps people to get on in society.

You mention Sweden there, as a model. Does any other country come to mind?

When I say Sweden there, I would be thinking policies…programmes…I would not be thinking people. The government have some good policies for immigrants but the people are not welcoming. Here in Ireland, people will meet up after work for a pint or for coffee and interact. It is not like that in Sweden. I think that in the US they have some good things about citizenship. If you are to become a citizen there is a process. In Ireland there is no process.

Do you think that this impacts on the children's education?

Yes, getting citizenship takes over 3 years. That is too long. If you (Ireland) don't want to give people citizenship, you tell them on time. Don't hold them to ransom.

Is that three years from the time of arrival in the country?

No, from the time of application and the applicant must be in the country over five years…so there is a long waiting period. So hypothetically speaking, you can have a child in the Irish education system for seven, eight, nine years…in a state of uncertainty..?

Yes, in the US, if you qualify for citizenship you must sit an exam. In Ireland there is no exam and I am not advocating for any exam but what I would encourage is for people to do a kind of orientation of ,say, six weeks and that the completion of the six weeks orientation would be compulsory for your citizenship to be approved.

I don't think that somebody carrying an Irish passport cannot speak English. I don't think that it is right. I was in court in 2001, where a man who was also swearing allegiance had no English at all, so he needed a translator. If he has children in school how can he support the schooling…helping at homework and so on, without any knowledge of English. It's a disaster.

In my opinion the parents' competence in the English Language is very important. In other countries like Canada and Australia, parents get support-after school or during the day- in order to help their children with homework.

Chinedu, I would like to ask you about how cultural/religious issues impact on the education of the young person? For example, do you think that there should be more flexibility, in relation to the school uniform, on religious grounds?

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I don't think so. I don't think it's right. If you look at it from an international point of view, a cultural point of view, that does not mean that you should be stupid. If you decide to come to a country and you know that you need English to work, the tendency would be that you start to learn the language. So in the same way, if you know that going to school in Ireland involves wearing a school uniform…this is not about life and death…this is not about food…this is about a school uniform okay and I have not seen any school uniform that will make you lose your religion, that will make you lose your culture. I don't think it's right that, you know, that (the school) would have to make concessions.

The only thing that you can do is with the style…if it is a skirt and you don't like mini-skirt because of your religion or because it is cold..you get a longer skirt or wear trousers so long as it complies with the colour of the school uniform.

Is that (opinion) part of your philosophy on interculturalism?

When you permit somebody to come and study with you (in your country), adaptation is important. A problem could arise if s/he was expected to eat food that s/he would not usually eat, pork for example, on religious grounds…but there should not be a problem in relation to a school uniform. There are standards and there are systems and those systems need to be respected……in the secondary school system.

What are the impacts of the economic recession on intercultural education in Ireland.?

Cutbacks in English language support impacts hugely on newcomer students as well as on the teachers in the schools. The recession is having a lot of negative impact on intercultural education.

What about attitudes?

I don't think that the recession has brought many changes in that area as I think (Irish) people were coming to terms with multiculturalism and Integration and while we were talking about Integration, the economy collapsed. Then it became an individual thing-people thinking about themselves.

Some people think that immigrants are costly and that sort of thing but many have come to realise that Irish people emigrate to other countries and they have to be received. I have not

come across terrible situations in relation to deterioration of attitudes towards immigrants at present.

Did the Ministry of Integration achieve anything worthwhile.?

In my opinion the first Minister for Integration achieved the most. He lived in Dublin, was outgoing, came to events, mixed with and listened to people. The second minister (John Curran) was not interested in integration but focussed on drugs strategy and during his tenure not much was achieved. Mary White, initially was interested in a lot of things but they told her to "shut up" as of that time the recession had come and she could not go about saying anything she wanted. She also held the Equality brief.

Do you think that the issue of Integration fell down the list of priorities.?

I personally believe so, Yeah, I believe so Yes.

Did this impact on Education?

I think so. The minister for Integration had a remit for Education and Justice at the early stages with a remit to come up with an integration strategy. As we speak there is no Integration strategy.

Was it (integration) ever really defined?

Conor Lenihan (Minister for Integration) had a document, okay, and when it was launched most of the things mentioned there were sterile. 50% of the items will never be carried out and I don't believe that the government is committed to intercultural education- one of the reasons being that-"they will go back to their own countries" They (government) hadn't really looked at that. They should have looked at how many immigrants are buying houses, how many immigrants have children in this country – that those kids- once they get into school and college, it is extremely difficult to uproot them. Nobody thought about all these things.

So, it wasn't really thought through?

There is still opportunity for them to get it right. That depends on the Taoiseach having commitment- get the best Minister for Integration and be committed to it. Until we get that it will never work.

When you say 'work' where should the emphasis be?

Education-education of immigrants. Make them understand that Ireland is their home-not just a place to make money to send home. In America once you get your passport you are proud-proud to be American. Why can't the same thing be done here? Call Ireland their home and not just be "passers by?

Do you know many newcomer students in secondary education here?

I do. I meet many from time to time.

How do they see their future here in relation to further education for example?

Very difficult. We take children of migrants here on work experience (internships) One has just finished college. She was born here and came through the education system. I find it difficult to see her place in Ireland but she does not have a place abroad either. Her identity is complex. She sees herself as Irish yet people who don't know her would not see her as such and that is conflicting, in terms of who she is. It is difficult for her.

Many of them are confused and even those with ability are going to find it very difficult. They have identity crisis. What I am saying is that there are going to be more issues for the country to deal with.

Why do you think this is an issue for children of immigrants?

The policies and programmes of the State have contributed to this. It is the state that has failed them.

What about the education system?

They, the ones I know anyway, are probably very happy with the education they received and can stand up and be counted as educated people.

Appendix 14

Mr. Clement Esabamen, former Policy Advisor to Minister for Integration

Profile

Worked for 8 years in Dublin West for communities experiencing disadvantage, rising to Equality & Diversity Coordinator.

Led innovative community projects at local, national and EU level

Appointed as Senior Policy Adviser at Office of Minister for Integration,(2007–09). The first immigrant to hold such a position he was Special Adviser to the Minister in Departments of Justice, Education and Community and participated in a government initiative to deal with large volume immigration into Ireland which culminated with the publication of a new policy statement "Migration Nation."

Masters in Economic Development Studies from University College Dublin in 2001. He was admitted to the prestigious Doctorate in Governance Programme at the School of Law, Queen's University Belfast in 2005.

Transcript of interview

Interviewer briefly explains that the research involves an examination of the education of newcomer students at second level. Newcomer students in this research refers to first generation children of migrants who speak English as a second or as another language.

Q. What are your perceptions on the education of newcomer students in Ireland.?

A. I think the education system in itself here has been able to deal rather effectively with the majority of people who have moved here into second level especially. My experience is that the system is able to cope at least 85% of the time. We do have, however, that shortfall, that 15% of native Irish children, but with the immigrant children that percentage is higher-those who are not getting that 100% quality and attention whether in the classroom or in terms of supports

I look at it this way, the education system is set up in a way, structurally to be able to deliver, at least at face value, to deliver to anyone who comes into the school, into the classroom. The school is set up structurally. The system of supports are there, as are resources. The question of resources becomes again that central plank on which discussion takes place about how the system serves who it is supposed to serve.

Mm

The system is set up and caters for and copes with that 85%. A gap emerges where a failure of structure becomes apparent and evident- the people who traditionally experience disadvantage in terms of family status, family background and now with immigration issues of language and culture. In order to plug the gap of disadvantage we need to focus on the barriers faced by international students that are coming.

In your opinion what are the actual barriers faced by newcomer/international students?

It is not always just a question of resources. It is a question of reprioritising resources- resources to international students. Attitude is a big thing. It is everything that you learn from I suppose the whole society,, from the media, from the environment-the state. The State ought to step in. "This is how we want you to form your opinion for your involvement. If we (the state) are paying you this is how you must do it" The failure of the teachers unions , the constituent authorities in the Department of Education and Skills have a responsibility and when responsibility is limited to the realm of rhetoric rather than practical solutions that go beyond the question of resources then there is a disservice to people on the margins and of course, automatically, people without (English) language, without family connections, in the traditional areas, people who are migrants, or children of migrants in the system are automatically disadvantaged.

This was the argument that the Department took upon itself, in their own viewpoint, to include children of immigrants as a target group in terms of intervention-extra school intervention programme to sort and redress the imbalance.

How, in your opinion, can this be done?

Attitude is a big thing and it's about remodelling responsibilities and looking at the role that teachers have and at what the outcomes should be – determining what these outcomes should

be in relation to every student in the classroom. There are models for this. In Finland, for example, there are milestones that each student should actually meet, for a teacher or a school authority to be considered successful – rather than average league tables-you know that kind of way, average league tables do not define everything. The league tables do not focus on the 15%.

What do you think of supports for parents of newcomer (international) students, particularly recently arrived parents whose children are enrolled at second level?

Well I think that the legal system, especially for the asylum seeker causes a lot of frustration for the asylum seeker parent, in terms of access to social services, education support, language support for adults.

Adult migrants who come as qualified workers are not allowed to depend on the State. If you come here as a migrant worker you are expected to "put your head down"

Each policy on immigration tells us that "This is not a country of immigration" Ten years on into the migration story in Ireland we cannot expect people to come here as units of labour and subsequently go away. We cannot compartmentalise people, as sardines or whatever. The people who came here, if they are adults they will have children, people who come here as family, families with needs. We must be able to factor in the costs of all these needs into our system.

This is what we have been unable to do – as a state-as a government, the last government and consequently support for parents was not defined. They (supports for parents) were very ad hoc and led by voluntary organisations in the community, trying to do the best, trying to address the very obvious gap.

I remember working in Tallaght about 2001 and a huge problem was identified that the parents were at a loss. In the area of (English) language acquisition, parents identified that children were making progress in the classroom but were going back to their homes where English was not spoken. Children were sometimes used by parents, as interpreters, to deliver a message. Some cases where a sanction from the school was issued in relation to a kid..lots of things were lost in translation. This led to a situation that there was something missing.

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The State did provide up to a point, the VEC's provided VTOS courses in the English language-basic English provision- but limited provision.

Do you have any other points, Clement, on the impact of parents' English language deficit, on the education of their children?

A disconnect exists between the parent and the child-absolutely and this is even more evident today, ten years on. Those kids who came into the primary system at 6 or 7 years of age are now 16 or 17 and I know that differences between parent and children have really widened even to the extent of parents calling in social services.! The social cost is already beginning to take its toll. An example of the rift between the perception of child in relation to parent can be illustrated by the following example. The child learned English since coming to Ireland and complains "My Mum is stupid. She doesn't understand English. When you speak to her she won't understand you."

The reality is that the mother is a highly educated woman with a PhD in Physics, whose first language is Arabic and this is the language that she communicates in.

Around this issue of language gulf between child and parent, is the issue of respect for parents. Unfortunately this can lead to young people wanting to be as far away from their parents as possible. This situation is developing in a minority of cases and we need to focus on these as they can be left behind.

In your experience, have any newcomer children been at the receiving end of racism?

Children are bullies, hierarchy and all that kind of thing. We used to deal with that kind of stuff I the early days, kids being called names, especially when they went into first year in second level.

Kids at that age,12 or 13, can become a bit nasty anyway and they find ways to push buttons and kids used to complain about that. However, schools have been able to contain it, by and large. It is in their own interest to do so, not only to maintain discipline, but also to give credence to what they are trying to teach. Isn't that the case? You are trying to teach dignity and respect all the time.

The crux of the issue of the issue is how the school as an institution, as an organisation-students, teachers and management are able to institutionally devise means that includes all

members of the school community and to be able to do that…to challenge the negative. If a school is unable to challenge negative issues then that's a problem. I think that is a problem in a lot of schools.

Racism is a system that acts out prejudice based on somebody's identity-it could be national identity…in Ireland when a group is not considered to be a part of the main group. Racism is a system…that's the way I look at it…where working class parents aspire to middle class and their children who are not geniuses and may be struggling to get on, need all the support they can get. If a teacher has to pay a lot of attention to a new student from, say, Azerbaijan, time and attention is taken from other children. A parent may complain that "attention is taken away from my child." I can understand that. International students who come mid-session can disrupt everybody and can take up (teachers' time)

How does the school respond?

Usually by putting the child into a segregated class-segregation regardless of the level of English.

What can the education system do about this?

Brian Hayes made this point in the Dail about the "special class" syndrome. That is not the solution. This is an instance where people are challenged and the school needs to look for the means to empower people. If we are talking about resources. I see/hear it everywhere. "We don't have resources because of overheads etc…"

How about looking at the resources you (school) have and use these creatively? How many schools save resources by changing their electricity provider, for example? We can save u to 20% by doing this in the home. I'd like to know how many school principals think about that at all? That is the question of resources.

Thank you Mr.Esabamen for the interview

Appendix 15

Transcript of Interview with school principal Mr N. June 2011

Interviewer: What are your views on the attendance patterns of newcomer students?

I believe that the attendance patterns of newcomer students in the school fall into two separate categories- a proportion are very good or excellent-90% attendance or over while the second group fall into the poor attendance category and within this some have extremely poor attendance.

When you are following up on absenteeism, in some home situations, parental command of English can be quite poor. So, therefore it can be quite difficult to maintain that positive contact between school and home.

It can also be difficult to stress the importance of regular attendance in school. Sometimes the newcomer student, who has mastered English can use that advantage to manipulate the parent with the English language deficit.

What are your views on the integration of newcomer students, generally?

In my opinion, the integration of newcomer students in this school has improved. In comparison with say, five or six years ago I felt that their marginalisation in school was quite overt. Now I feel that there are more examples of positive integration.

Ok

Although there is still evidence that some newcomer students group together – group together for some form of support, during school breaks. They tend to congregate in the little seating area outside my office, which I think in itself is quit telling. They have taken over the short corridor, seating area there-it's warm and dry. We have an arrangement that they keep the place neat and tidy and take any litter with them at the end of the breaks.

How did this phenomenon of laying claim to that area as their territory occur?

It just happened.

Nationality wise, what is the composition of the group?

It (the group) is a mixture of the different nationalities that we have here in the school.

Why, do you think, did they choose that particular space?

I imagine that they picked that particular space because they felt unwelcome in "The Quad"(an area in the school where many students socialise during school breaks). Different year groups occupy different parts of "The Square." 6th, 5th and TY have their own "places" there. It is very territorial. There is no real place in The Square for a relatively large group of international students. The international group who stay together don't go to The Square except for a small number who stay with a group of their classmates.

So, a minority of newcomers would stay in The Square?

Yes a very small number. The majority stay in the space outside my office which they have claimed as their area for congregating during break times.

What is it about the minority, who socialise with their classmates and Irish peers in the Square.?

Because they have integrated well with Irish students, are more likely to involved in extra-curricular activities and these particular international students have, by and large, got academic ambitions.

Mmm. So they have this in common with the Irish peers whom they socialise with.

Yes. However, overall the involvement of newcomer students in extra-curricular activities is poor-sport, Student Council, Bene Merenti – overall the representation of newcomer students in all these activities is extremely poor.

What about the take – up of Transition Year?

Very few do TY – on average one a year- this year we had one, last year none and one the previous year. This year, let me look at the list, three newcomer students have put their names down. That is much better than the usual.

Is bullying/racism a part of the newcomer student experience in the school?

We have an anti-bullying policy and racism would come under this policy so there are structures in place to deal with racism and bullying. A Year Head and SPHE coordinator are evaluating this policy and emerging issues will be addressed. Issues have always been addressed as they arise but the Year Head and the SPHE coordinator want to look at this whole area in greater detail and put in place any necessary interventions. I feel that racism is a form of bullying and is very serious. Not many have come to my attention but, first year in particular, in the first term there were a number of incidents between girls. A number of Polish girls were here with me in the office and they were extremely fluent, articulate and clear about the racist tones that they had to endure, from some Irish girls.

Did they give any examples of what was actually said to them?

Yes, that they are Polish tramps and they should go home

Any other incidents reported to you?

Yes, a second year boy, came to me very upset, told me he was called "a Paki." This happened on the school corridor. So we checked the (CCTV) cameras and we found the 3rd year boy who was responsible for it. There were a number of witnesses who were able to identify him. He couldn't deny it and had to accept the consequences of his behaviour. These incidents were dealt with along with another incident of racism, this school year. I am happy with the structure that we have in place to deal with this issue.

You mentioned earlier that the newcomer students who socialise with their Irish peers tend to be highly motivated academically. In general, what do you think of achievement levels among our general population of newcomer students?

The exam results of newcomer students are relatively poor. Look at the Leaving Cert. results last year. Abelardo sat the Leaving Certificate and did very well with over 500 points. As did Octavius who got close to 500. However, the majority did not do well, did not achieve. This year we have Fabek doing the Leaving and it will be interesting to see what he will obtain. He is very hardworking, ambitious, has mixed well with his peers and plans to go to university as his brother Abelardo did last year. Interestingly both represented the school in sport and they have a cousin in the school as well who models himself on these two boys.

Neither did TY and most of our students who score over 500 points have done TY. These boys are the exception in that they are in the 500 point category without doing TY.

What interventions can be put in place in order to raise the achievement levels of newcomer students who are underachieving?

It is getting more difficult as cutbacks to English language support means that some newcomer students will not have an EAL class but will have to stay in Irish to study. this school year the provision for our school was the equivalent of two teachers. That has now changed. I now am down to almost one quarter of a teacher for the whole school. From the equivalent of two teachers to .27! That's basically a problem for me and will be a HUGE LOSS for the newcomer students.

Parent – school engagement? How would you rate the contact between school and parents and attendance at parent teacher meetings, for example?

As I already mentioned in relation to following up on student absences, there is a difficulty when the parent has a low level of competence in English. We need to push this issue forward in relation to the general engagement of parents with the school.

I think inviting parents in outside of the parent/teacher meetings- a meeting with the class tutor, for example- we need to understand their concerns and their reasons for non-attendance (at p/t meetings). One of their concerns may be that they do not understand…so we are back to the language barrier. There is a huge fallout from the English language deficit in relation to parent school engagement.

Mr. N are there any other points that you would like to make in relation to challenges facing the education of newcomer students?

In order to address the attendance patterns of all students, we are introducing a new system for the forthcoming academic year. Next September, we will have a new system ANSEO which will be set up to track student attendance. Each student will be furnished with an ID/scan card.   Students will scan in every morning. If a student does not scan in a text will go home to parents. We feel that the scanning system will give a very accurate picture of student attendance and punctuality. It will make it easier for the school to track attendance and punctuality. The scanning machines will be turned off at 9.05. in this way late coming

will be addressed. They will have to come to reception. If a student doesn't scan, they will be marked absent and if so we will be looking for them-follow up straight away. So the onus is on the student to scan in.

Appendix 16

Student participants

I am doing a **research study** with **Dublin City University (DCU)** about students in secondary school, who speak English as a second or as another language. You are invited to take part in this research project. It is important for you to understand that it your choice to take part or not. Firstly I would have to get permission from your parents/guardians, in order for this to go ahead. Then I will ask you to read a consent form which I will explain to you. If you are willing to go ahead you will sign the consent form in the presence of a witness. The witness can be one of your teachers or your parent/guardian.

I will be asking you a number of questions about your life as a student in secondary school. I will divide you into groups, maximum eight in number. These are called **focus groups.** I will ask you a number of questions and I will record you as you talk. Later I will type out what you said. The questions will be about how long you are in the school, how you are getting along with your school work both in the classroom and at home.

I want to know how you are getting on in secondary school with your studies, with homework and in your school life generally.   I will ask you about your involvement in extra-curricular activities like sport and music I will also ask you about your involvement in lunchtime and after school activities. I am also interested in how you get support in the school at times when you are unsure about something or having a problem with class work, homework or something of a personal nature. I will ask you about Transition year and your plans for the future.

 The length of the focus group discussion will be 80 minutes, about two class periods. I will record the discussion which I will write up later and then delete the recorded version. Your real names will not be used in the written report.

Consent from Parents/Guardians

I am inviting your son/daughter to partake in the research as outlined above. Your son/daughter agreed to explain the research to you but in order for them to partake I must obtain your permission. The decision to partake is voluntary and your son/daughter can withdraw at any time.

Having discussed the matter with your son/daughter if you have any further questions please contact Seamus O'Connor at _____. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office for the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University. Dublin 9. 01- 7008000.

If you are happy for your son/daughter to partake in the research please sign below.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Appendix 17

Focus Group Discussion Group 1 – 5 students -

General Introduction and explanation of research, confidentiality and anonymity

Facilitator: Thanks for agreeing to take part in the research. I would like you to begin by saying how long you have been in the country and how long you have been in primary education and second level in this country and in this school.

Each participant introduces himself/herself stating how long they are living in Ireland and their educational background in Ireland.

Abbon: I am here 5 years-2 in primary and 3 in secondary

Baibina: I arrived here 3 years ago- came straight into 1st year secondary school.

Cajetan: I am in Ireland for 4 years. This is my first year in this school. Spent 3 years of primary and 1 year of second level in T_____ (Another town)

Danilo I am in Ireland for 5 years -2 in primary here in this town and 3 in this school.

Elana: Am three years in this country…this is my 1st year in this school. Did the first two years of secondary school in W_____ (another school)

F. How are you getting on with the subjects you are studying now?

A: I find Science difficult..really difficult

B: I am having difficulty in many subjects….Home Economics, Science, English.   Art and Maths are good for me

C: Science, Business.

D: …not really any subject in particular…sometimes find it difficult to understand the questions in exams, but now that is getting easier for me.

F. Any ideas on what is causing these difficulties for you, as you try to understand these subjects.?

C: The words are very difficult in Science

A   For me too…words in Science hard to understand. Also I am not doing well in Spanish but I will give that up next year and do Japanese.

B My attendance is not good so I am failing in many subjects

E …..I don't really have problems understanding the subjects. I studied English in Primary school, before I came to Ireland.

D: I no longer have the problem with English because when I think in my language, I cannot keep up but now I think in English.

C: For me it is because of my poor English..English still difficult for me.

F: Most of you mention the English language there. Would you like to say more about that

D: In Primary school when I arrived with no English it was hard for me and even in first and second year. If your English is not good it is so hard to learn and teacher speaks very fast. You stay quiet because you do not know how to say the question

A: Yes and when my English got better I could understand more but in some subjects like Science it is still difficult because the words some of them are very hard.

C: I get confused when I am trying to learn so many things and I fall behind and I am trying to catch up. In EFL class I am not learning at all because of messing

D: Yes you are taken out of Irish for EFL put in with other students who do not do Irish and sometimes there are messing and wasting time. In first and second year was better, only with students from other countries but in third year we are in with the Irish students who do not do Irish. When our English is good we should do something else during this time.

C: When I am in the exam I will not do the answer right because I do not understand what the question is

D Yeah the questions in exams can still confuse me a little in some subjects. I am wondering what are they asking me to write about.

F: Ok you made good points there about the difficulties you have in your education. Do any of you wish to talk about the good things that are happening in your education here in Ireland, here in this school?

A My school reports get better and some of my teachers say on my report that I am an excellent student or a very good student

D: Also, when my mastery of English got better my marks got better and this is good

E: When I come from another school to third year some teachers in the school were kind to me

C: Some (teachers) were friendly and help me.

A: I learn other languages from my friends. I come from K_____ and I can speak B_____because most of my friends are from B_____. I can help my friends.

F: I would like to ask you about attendance. As part of my research I was checking your attendance on e-portal database and would like to find out your opinions about your attendance.

Smiles and some laughter

F: Who would like to say something on this

D: In first year I mitched a lot, could go home at lunchtime as parents were not at home.

B: I know that my attendance is not good. You can see that (on e-portal) oh

F: Why?

A   She has allergies

B   Yeah, I have allergies

F: Yes. Do you mind me asking you why are so many of your absences unexplained even though you have a health condition….unexplained absences on the e-portal are noted

B: The cert about the allergy is in K_____ the country where I come from. I have to go to a specialist back home so I miss time to do that.

F: D, mentioned mitching there, can we talk about this? Is there much of it is going on? and so on

D: Yes when I mitched in 1st year it was easy to do it regularly. If I didn't go home I could meet up with others and walk around the shopping centre. If Mr. P_____ (school management) asked us the next day we made up excuses and he believed us. I think he didn't want to be involved asking us too much because of racism.

F: Racism?

 D: …as if he didn't want to follow it up with us (newcomers) and be accused of racism

A: If you were "on the hop" from a class and a teacher asks you on the corridor you could say "I am going to EFL class." Teachers who don't know the student could follow this up but usually believe it. Even Irish students could sometimes pretend to do EFL. This was a loophole I the school.

A: Yes, some of us would pick and choose classes, sometimes hide in the toilet to miss a class.

D: I was good at making excuses, if a note came home, telling my parents "It's not important, don't worry about it."

F: Let us look at punctuality –arriving to school on time. Lates are recorded as well as unexplained absences. Do any of you have lates?

D Not this year but in the past I did

E No

A: Sometimes late, need to get up earlier

B Sometimes I am late and I get a late stamp.

F: What are your plans for Senior Cycle next year

A: I am going into 5th year not doing TY (Transition Year).

C: I will not do TY because it is an extra year in school I will drop French and do Japanese.

E: I will go into 5th year

D: I put down my name for TY

B: I will go into 5th year

F: Did you discuss the decisions about Senior Cycle with anyone in your family?

D: I got advice from my parents

C: I talk with my Mum but she don't understand everything

B: No, I talk with my friends

A: *No*

E: *No*

F: Why did you decide against doing Transition Year (TY)

C: An extra year in school

B: Too much money needed for trips

A: It cost too much and we have to stay another year in the school

E: My friends don't want to do it because of extra year and I agree

F: What are your plans for the future?

A: I would like to go back home when I finish and join the Army.

D: Don't know

C: I would like to join the Army in my country.

E: Don't know

B: Would like to do something in Music and Art when I finish school as I like these subjects.

F: Is there anything else you would like to talk about in relation to your experiences in school.

D: Yes bullying and racism.

F: Ok

D: I was bullied very hard in Primary school. Some were really mean. Teachers ignored this. People hated us and made lies to the teachers. Bullying still goes on like someone shouting on the corridor "foreigner" or "Go back to your own country" or "Polish dog"

Racism is a serious thing. Random people on the corridor calling names…thinking of other people in a different way…difference

When I was in 2nd Year an Irish guy didn't like me because of my background, would say "f***** foreigner" Once at the front of the school someone pushed me, hit me followed me and got me to fight by teasing me calling me "softie"

Because of the serious racism I couldn't find anything in common with the Irish. My best friend went back to our country and I was a loner.

In 3rd year I spoke English more often, tried harder in class by answering up. You can get friends easily by smoking.

E: Smoking is against my religion so I cannot do this to make friends

D: E. is bullied by students in school and outside school. I have witnessed this. One particular boy threatens him and mocks him. Another said something to him about "cookies on his head" and another third year student calls him "a terrorist." This happened in Area 3 in the school.

E. agrees that these incidents occurred and seems upset. As the time slot of 1 hr and 20 minutes (2 class periods) is up. I invite the group to continue the discussion at another time. I make it clear that I want to begin the next session where we left off (bullying/racism) and that they are welcome to return to discuss these and other issues. I arrange a time with them and emphasise that their participation is voluntary. D and E indicate that they will return.

Follow-up Interview with D and E

F: Thanks for returning to continue our discussion. The last day we discussed many issues and ended our discussion on bullying and racism as experienced by newcomer students in the school. (I briefly summarise what was said on this particular issue) So who would like to begin today.

D: E is bullied because he is belongs to another religion. People think simple, are not open, are not open minded-looking at people in a different way.

E: I am called "terrorist" or someone might say "Bin Laden was your Dad." This is hurtful. I try to explain to them the facts but they laugh and shout and call me "black" They insult me.

I try to get them in a good way and I don't want to fight. Some would like me to fight them. One time I was punched in the belly and I told the teacher and nothing was done about it. I am told (by parents) to respect authority- the teacher, the school, the doctor and some will say "Don't mind them" But it's hard for me to concentrate in class because of this.

D: How one particular student (says name) is treating E. is bullying

E: It's Racism

D: You can teach Stop Racism but some will never stop doing it. The students who do this are troublesome students. The fight I was pushed in to that I told you about the last day was with a foreign student but I did not call him by the "n" word.

F: Have you heard the "n" word used by others towards this student or towards other students?

D: *Yes*

E: The students who call me names ,sometimes call me black.

Focus Group Discussion Group 2 - 4 students-

General Introduction and explanation of research, confidentiality and anonymity

Discussion opens:

Facilitator: Thanks for agreeing to take part in the research. I would like you to begin by saying how long you have been in the country and how long you have been in primary education and second level in this country and in this school.

Each participant introduces himself/herself stating how long they are living in Ireland and their educational background in Ireland.

Nazaire: I am in Ireland 8 years in total - 5 in primary and 3 in secondary

Taurin: I arrived here 5 years ago

Octavo: I am in Ireland for 12 years.

Rafael: I am in Ireland for 3 years

Quinci: *6 years*

F: I would like you to talk about your level of English.

R: I was taught English back in my own country, private tuition from the age of 4, so English has never been a problem for me.

T: I had no English when I arrived in primary school 5 years ago, and now I am happy with my English and if I don't understand I will ask.

O: My English is good but if I don't understand I would be too embarrassed to ask a question.

Q: I am happy with English

N: I got private tuition in English in my own country before I came to Ireland.

F: Good. Do you speak English outside the classroom /the school.

N: Depends on who your friends are. Will speak English with Irish friends and don't speak my own language in school as nobody in school is from S_____(country)

T: Will speak my own language at home My parents speak L____ all the time and my sisters so we don't speak English at home.

R: will speak my own language even in school as many students are from my country and we meet at break and where we live. In my house , parents speak our language and I have a three year old sister. Nobody speaks English to a three year old. When we go to the crèche, parents and their children speak their language to each other and crèche workers try to get them to speak English.

O: In school I speak English all the time as apart from my cousin, nobody in the school speaks my language. In my home we speak our own language but we speak English as we have a business where many Irish people come and we all help in the work in this business and speak with Irish people a lot.

Q: I speak my own language regularly in the school with my friends and at home. I speak English to teachers and others who can't speak my language.

F: Very good. How many languages and what other languages do you speak?

Q: I speak 4 – Russian. Latvian, Polish and English with a small bit of German.

O: 3 languages, English, Russian and my own country

R: I speak 3 languages

N: I speak 3 - English and I learned French from a relative in Switzerland who I stay with every summer and I speak the language from my country.

T: I speak 3 languages and am learning some from friends of other nationalities.

F: Tell me about your friendships

T: It is hard to make friends with Irish, easier to make friends with people from other countries.

O: I play soccer and basketball with Irish students but most of my friends are from other countries.

N: Soccer has helped me to make new friends

R: I have friends in the estate where I live. Many of us (newcomer families) live in the same estate or close by and we play soccer.

T: First year was good with basketball training and league, was a good way to make friends.

Q: I made new friends by going to the skate park since 1st year in secondary school. Some Irish but mostly from my own country and other countries.

It was difficult to make friends with Irish at first because of the name-calling… like someone shouting directly at you "foreigner" or "Get back to your own country" This was upsetting and some were older. I have an older brother who got into a physical fight in the town because of the name-calling.

F; Is the name-calling still going on?

Q: Not directly. They have got used to me. I am at ease now. Also I took up boxing but not because of the name-calling. (all laugh)

F: I would like to ask you about attendance. As part of my research I was checking attendance on e-portal database and would like ask you about your attendance.

R: My attendance was bad in first 1st and 2nd year, mitching regularly, would go home, leave at lunchtime, take the afternoon off.

Q: Yes, some of us mitched and it was easy to do. One time we mitched class and stayed in an empty room and when Mr. P. found us , we told him it was a EFL class and he left us there

T: my attendance was always good.

R: When a letter goes home the student reads it and parent doesn't know.

T: I can't make up excuses-my stepdad reads English.

F: Did your attendance improve this year?

R: Yes, part of growing up and learning and the exam year.

F: Do your parents attend parent/teacher meetings?

N: *no*

O: *yes*

Q: *no*

T: always

R: never

F: What are your plans for Senior Cycle next year

All said that they would go into 5th year and were not interested in Transition Year (TY)
Because of the extra year in school and because of costs. Reasons given were the same as
Group 1

F: Did you discuss the decisions about Senior Cycle with anyone in your family?

T. and O. discussed with parents. the others made their decisions based on what they heard
in school and from their friends.

Appendix 19

Focus group discussion 3 Senior Cycle 5 students

Facilitator: I would like to ask you about attendance patterns of newcomer students. As part of my research I was checking attendance on e-portal database and would like to find out your opinions on attendance patterns.

Cassius : Some students don't care about their attendance because their parents are not strict enough. They (parents and student) don't plan for the future, about college. They just think about now and that is wrong.

Darius: Attendance at school is about character. It depends on the person. If you want to you can do it if you don't want …

Flavius: My attendance could be better. I care about it

Claudia: My attendance is good but when I came three years ago many times in the class I learn nothing because I did not understand everything in the class. Some of my friends would not go to class because of that. They don't go because they are bored.

Justus: Loads of students mitch because they think that it is a waste of time in class.

F: Why?

Justus: like Claudia said if you don't understand it gets boring. English was a problem for me when I came in 2nd Year, a problem understanding. You can't concentrate if you don't understand. When my English improved it was better in class. The students who are here longer speak better English and get better results.

F: Is their attendance better?

Justus: for some yes but nor for all

Cassius : A student with poor attendance might mitch class because of homework. If s/he does not have the homework done and the teacher is very strict s/he will mitch the class to avoid a detention. The students who are not interested in study will not do homework. They don't care about homework.

Darius: If they are out with friends and come home late the homework is not done.

Justus: when teachers don't ask you why it is easier to do. In my first two years here, if I was absent, they didn't bother asking for a note. I felt invisible.

Claudia: Sometimes friends can ask you to come and mitch for the day or for the afternoon and you want to stay with your friends.

Flavius: Sometimes a teacher can give up asking if a student is "on the hop" a lot…due to students' reputation. I know a student who mitched for half a year and had 3 "mitching Buddies"

Justus: like Claudia said if you don't understand it gets boring. English was a problem for me when I came in 2nd Year, a problem understanding. You can't concentrate if you don't understand. When my English improved it was better in class. The students who are here longer speak better English and get better results.

F: Is their attendance better?

Justus: for some yes but nor for all

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Darius: If they are out with friends and come home late the homework is not done.

Justus: when teachers don't ask you why it is easier to do. In my first two years here, if I was absent, they didn't bother asking for a note. I felt invisible.

Claudia: Sometimes friends can ask you to come and mitch for the day or for the afternoon and you want to stay with your friends.

Flavius: Sometimes a teacher can give up asking if a student is "on the hop" a lot…due to students' reputation. I know a student who mitched for half a year and had 3 "mitching Buddies"

F: How do students spend their time when mitching from school.

Flavius: Stay at home parents at work

Darius: With the X-box

Justus: Buddies would come round

Flavius: Have a few drinks

F: Some of you mentioned a link between attendance and friends there. Can I ask you about friendships for newcomer students, in general?

Darius: I get more friends the longer I stay here but students with most friends can be easily distracted. If they are out with friends and come home late the homework is not done.

Claudia: Students who are here longer are more settled with friends

Justus: There is always the fear of expressing yourself in English, the fear of being laughed at. So it is difficult to make Irish friends. You will stay with people from your own country are people who are from other countries but learning English like you are.

Claudia: Making friends can be a problem and you only have a few at the beginning. Student always feels conscious of standard of English in class when answering or offering to answer.

Cassius : Too many stay with Skype/ Facebook and phoning friends at home…only mixing with Polish People. A lot depends on the personality of the person. Some don't want to make friends or won't make any effort.

Darius: I made more friends when I joined the local soccer club and have Irish friends and go to their houses.

Cassius: Yes it helps when you get involved in sport and if you represent the school on a team. We find that the Irish are friendly and we have integration in class. We go to parties with Irish people.

F: Can I ask you about how your parents help with your education

My parents English has improved a little to a lot but I speak Polish at home with parents.

Parents have no English-do not go to parent – teacher meetings-embarrassed

Cassius: Student-parent relationship is so important to help with education. *My Dad attends*

Some parents with little or no English sometimes don't know what the notes in the journal are about or what they are signing

Time of the meeting does not suit my parents who are working.

Not all parents get the call parents message because the contact number used is sometimes the students number. When the form was filled when the student was applying to the school, the student might put in his or her own number.

F: Did you do Transition Year (TY)?

D,C,J, & F Did not do TY

Claudia: Came to the school three years ago and was put into TY. Did not learn much in TY year. Would not recommend anyone to do it.

F: teacher student relationship

Darius: Teachers will do their best to support you I can remember about ten good teachers over the last four years. With a project or something like that teacher will offer help to those who want it-only a small number will avail of the extra help.

Cassius: Again it is down to the character of the student. If you have a good attitude the teacher will help you.

Justus: The school supports are good enough and students will still do what they want.

Claudia: EFL teachers helped us improve our English.

Flavius: We are prepared for the Leaving Certificate – feel more prepared, understand more, feel more confident because of good support from some (teachers)

Cassius: Of course some teachers are better than others in helping all students and our soccer coach (a teacher) gives the team plenty of his time

Darius: One teacher I know doesn't care about any students.

F: Plans for the future

Flavius: Hope to study Computers or Sport

Justus: I hope to pass the Leaving Certificate and then to work and make money for a year. After that am not sure, might go to Sports college back in my country

Darius: At the start of the year I thought that my family were moving to Australia to join our cousins but now we are staying here in Ireland. I am going to train to be an electrician. My father is a qualified electrician.

Claudia: I have applied to CAO. I have changed my mind about the courses and am not sure about what I will take.

Cassius: At the start of the year I thought that I would go back to my country to train in the air force but I have changed my mind. Both my parents are working here and will stay longer so perhaps I will train in college here. I will wait to see how I do in the Leaving Certificate.

Focus Group 4

Focus Group Discussion Group 4 students- 6th year students

General Introduction and explanation of research, confidentiality and anonymity

Interviewer:

Tell me about your background?

Harata:

There are 3 in my family, my Mum my younger brother and me. We arrived in Ireland in first year- tiny, tiny English. I was 12 I did not like school at all-in the classroom I was thinking when is this class going to end because **I did not understand anything** (student's emphasis)

Barita:

I came to Ireland at 14 was put into 2nd year

Suzi:

 I came from my country with my Mum and my stepdad and I was put into 5th class.

Christaldo

Came when I was 13

Interviewer:

Did you speak any English when you came to Ireland?

Barita:

I had no English

Harata:

Very little

Suzi:

Tiny English - teacher had taught me in my home country

Christaldo:

No English

Interviewer:

Can you think back to what it was like for you when you first came to this country?

Christaldo:

I came over with my Mum and her partner and my sister. I missed my country sooo much – my friends back home. It was difficult to adjust to the summers in Ireland and the winters I had no friends. Later I got friends in school.

Harata:

Came over Yes (Pause) my father had a business

Suzi:

Difficult; I was home alone. No friend…slept all day; depressed-slept all day.

Interviewer:

Who were you living with at the time?]

I was living with my Mum with my Auntie's and her husband. All were working. It was two months before I went to school. My cousin organised for me to go to St. Catherine's Primary School.

Barita:

In the early days all the time with my Mum and stepdad and my brother…my real father was (is) back in Brazil. Missed Brazil-missed my grandmother. School was hard, the class were not welcoming, were laughing at me – didn't like my class-nasty and unfriendly.

Interviewer:

What was it like for you in the classroom?

Harata:

For one and a half years I was too shy to ask a question and then when I learned to ask a question in class it was too difficult to understand the answer.

Suzi:

Because I had started learning English while at Primary school when I got to secondary school I could understand teachers except for some words in some of the subjects. I am good at languages. It took me five months to learn English

Christaldo:

 Was held back because of no English

Barita:

 It was very difficult for me in 2nd and 3rd year and then in 3rd year I had to do the Junior Certificate and even then my English was not good. It was too embarrassing to ask questions-didn't understand basic words for homework. When at home I was all the time with my Mum, stepdad and younger brother speaking Latvian.

Interviewer:

How many other languages do you speak?

C &S: I speak the language of   X _____(my country), with Y _____ (another major world language) and English.

Barita:

I speak Portuguese and Spanish as well as English

Harata:

I speak the language of the locality and Z _____ (with my parents). I can read and write in English.

Interviewer:

All respondents in this interview did a continental language (Spanish, German or French) for Junior Cycle and two of them (H. and B.) did one for the Leaving Certificate, but none claim to be fluent in their continental language of choice.

Interviewer:

Will you like to talk to me about making friends in school?

Suzi:

It was easy to make friends in Primary school even with Irish children. By Senior Cycle my friends are other foreign students

Barita:

It was not easy. When I started (in 2nd year) others in the class were laughing at me. I didn't like my class in 2nd and 3rd year

Harata:

Friendships with students from other countries

Christaldo:

Irish friends happened slowly

Suzi:

The EFL classes were very good for making new friends

Barita:

…but only new friends from other countries

Suzi:

Yes and we feel comfortable with each other-understand each other

Harata:

Yes

 Interviewer:

Is there anything else you would like to say about the EFL classes?

Suzi:

The EFL classes were good for our education but as time passed their usefulness became less

Barita:

In third year we were all put in together-didn't matter what level we were

Suzi:

 That was no good for students who knew more English

Barita:

  …and no good for student like me who had very little English

Christaldo:

In 5th and 6th year EFL classes became study classes and students not doing Irish were also in the EFL. Then students did homework because the teacher was not an EFL teacher but was there to supervise the class.

Harata:

 You can do homework and ask the teacher questions if you are not sure.

Interviewer:

Do your parents or guardians come to parent-teacher meetings?

Harata:

My mother had no English for a long time and now only a little and we still speak Urdu and Sindhi at home. She did not come into the meeting (parent/teacher) until this year for the first time. I came with her to translate. Before that my Aunt came.

Barita:

In second year nobody came-my Mum came in 3rd year but she could not come when I was in 5th year as she was working. In 6th year she went to one teacher only and she was my class tutor. She told her about how I was getting on generally.

Suzie:

In 1st year My Mum came while I translated –the same in third year. Nobody attended for 2nd and fifth year and in 6th year my older brother attended. It is not always important that they attend always, honestly.

Christaldo:

Parent came in when I was in 2nd and 3rd year

Interviewer:

How do you perform in tests and exams?

Harata:

 Didn't do well in Junior Certificate! Can't concentrate! My attendance wasn't good.

Christaldo:

Poor English held me back in the Junior Certificate but hope to do better in the Leaving Certificate because I understand the questions better and I want to go to third level.

Suzie:

Did not do well –did not know how to study –am better now.

Barita:

Did better at Senior Cycle

Interviewer:

A reluctance to talk about exams was noticeable.-

Interviewer:

Did any of you take part in extracurricular activities or represent the school in any event? Sport…music...anything?

Christaldo:

I played football in school and went to matches –was on school team.

Interviewer:

Yeah? What was that like for you?

Christaldo:

(Continues) Yes it was good –another way to make friends and meet Irish students.

Barita:

 Nothing of interest to me

Interviewer:

Would you go to watch any school events outside of school time?

Barita:

Yes went to Annual School Performances but never took part in any

Suzie:

Did not take part in anything and did not go to watch any school events.

Interviewer:

Did any of you opt for Transition year?

Christaldo:

Didn't want to do it - went on to 5th year

Barita:

I didn't like my class and I didn't want to spend another year with them. Many of them were doing TY so I decided to go on to 5th year and it was much better for me – the class were nicer.

Harata:

Went into 5th year LCA (Leaving Certificate Applied) and then left school during that year and came back into 5th year.

Christaldo:

No not interested in TY

Suzie:

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No did not think about it

Interviewer:

Looking back on your time in education so far, is there anything you'd like to change

Suzie:

Bi lingual teachers…multi lingual teachers

Teach more languages in secondary school

Barita:

 Racism name calling

Interviewer:

Have you experienced that?

Barita:

 Yes students say to me "your country is full of prostitutes and drugs.."

Suzie:

Go home to your country (the Irish students say)

Christaldo:

Schools can't stop racism People will always throw insults at you. There is equality and opportunity. It's up to you

Interviewer:

What are your plans for next year?

Harata:

Asked my permission to leave at this stage as she had arranged to be picked up from school at that time.

Barita:

  Will not get enough points for what I want to do. Would like to go back home where my real father is and my grandmother lives there.

R: What would you like to do?

Barita:

I have aptitudes in Chemistry and I love Biology

Christaldo:

Have applied to CAO for Computer Science course in a College of Technology in Dublin.

Suzi:

I have applied for PLC courses in colleges close to here – hoping to get into _____(name of College) but will go to university from there and if not will even wait for mature entry (over 23). I am ambitious and plan to stay in Ireland.

Interviewer:

Thank you

Appendix 21

Dr.Fidele Mutwarasibo Integration Manager at the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), 29TH July 2011

Profile:

Originally from Rwanda, Fidele lives in Ireland since September 1995. His earliest research on migration into Ireland took place in 2000 and led to the publication of *Africans in Ireland: Developing Communities*.

Founder member of Africa Centre - played an active role in two research projects on political integration of migrants in Ireland (Positive Politics in 2003 and Negative Politics in 2004).

Holds a MSc(Agr) from UCD (with Distinction), a Post Graduate Diploma from Trinity College and a Graduate Diploma from the Development Studies Centre - Kimmage Manor.

Worked with Canal Communities Partnership in community development. Since 2002, he works with the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI).

He is currently the ICI's Integration and Research Officer

Serves on the board -The Irish Migration, Race and Social Transformation Review; the HSE's Intercultural Strategy Steering Group; Dublin City Council's Anti Racism, Diversity & Integration Steering Group.

Migration and Citizenship Research Initiative based at UCD.

Politis project and authored a shadow report on integration of migrants in Ireland as part of the European Platform for Migrant Workers' Rights Network.

Currently the country Coordinator of the One-Stop-Shop initiative funded by the European Commission involving partners from Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and Germany.
http://www.ucd.ie/sociology/graduateprogrammes/phdprogrammes/fidelemutwarasibo

Q What are your ideas on the parental factor in children's education – home life, employment status of parents and so on.

A. As a parent, as an activist/lobbyist, I consider educational integration to be an issue if we want to have an equal society in Ireland in years to come. Education is a central issue is as far as if you are going to look for a job, for social mobility particularly in this economy. We have no choice but to encourage people to succeed. Integration, mainly through education, is the backbone of the project we are working on. We (ICI) are now working on this through *Pathways to Parental Leadership Programme* is funded by the European Programme for Integration and Migration.

We started in 2008, by looking at research in order to find out what was happening in schools – 5 schools in Dublin – we interviewed school staff and we interviewed migrant parents trying to figure out what is happening. At the moment we are working on a toolkit, which Geoff will talk about when I finish my input.

The aim of the *Pathways to Parental Leadership Programme* is to get the parents to engage in the schools in order to improve and enhance the education of their children.

Recently I attended a conference in Brussels and I was surprised by the fact that an expert from the U.S. had researched this topic (parental engagement in education) over a lengthy period of time. Also an professor from the London Metropolitan University and an expert from Spain - across the board they highlighted parental influence on educational attainment (of their children)

Ok

I was the last speaker and suffice to say that what I was about to say had already been said. I spoke about the ICI project and how the positive link between parents and educational

achievement can be highlighted and how parental involvement can be encouraged. There is the issue of the type of parents who will participate. Schools engage with parents, the willing participants, but equally need to engage the reluctant ones, in order to enhance their children's chances in education.

Q. Did your contribution to the conference, in relation to the Irish setting reflect the contribution of participants from other countries?

Yes, I was focused, in the presentation, on the importance of encouraging migrant parents to be involved in the education of their children, as is the focus of the ICI's *'Pathways to Parental Leadership'* initiative.

The proceedings will be put together this year for a launch on Sept.13th outlining what we are doing in a Report.

Very well

I will now hand over to Geoff for his contribution to this interview.

Interview continues including Geoff, Research Intern, ICI

One of the things that was behind the thinking on the toolkit was acknowledging the challenge that would be faced when trying to get change on an issue when dealing with the higher levels, whether it be when dealing with the Catholic Church or the Department of Education and Skills.   Instead we approached from what you would call a "bottom up" approach in order to deal directly with schools and teachers.

The toolkit is aimed at schools. It is for schools to read and to interpret and adapt it as best suits - the particular needs of their school.

Ok

And hopefully it is flexible enough, that it can match in with what they are already doing-adds to what they are doing or it (the toolkit) may inspire them if they don't know how to successfully engage with migrant parents

Yes

Like Fidele said there is that in America, parental involvement is seen as a *sine qua non* of education. I think that whilst that idea is finding an appreciation in Ireland, in Irish schools - particularly in primary schools but also in secondary schools in general – there is still yet no real policy on it by the Department of Education and Skills.

I think there is general more an acknowledgement of it at policy level. I think, for example, it is mentioned in the Intercultural Education Strategy the mention of the importance of parental engagement but there's no real policy on how that is to be attained so that we thought to just focus it at schools that are facing these issues and try to identify (the issues)

Q. What issues related to parental engagement, apart from parent-teacher engagement, were identified?

In the draft version we talk about general communication with parents-such as letters sent home. How do you translate such letters? Also what are the alternatives to letters? … because they are sort of limited by schoolchildren who must remember to show it to their parents, rather than leaving it in the bottom of their schoolbags – looking at alternatives such

as e-mails and text messages, school bulletins and newsletters just to distribute general information. These ideas have come from the (researched) schools.

Yes

It isn't us telling the schools how to do their jobs. This is what schools are telling us and we can disseminate this (information) for the benefit of other schools, who may not be addressing the issue (communication with parents)

Yes

We have communication, that is all well and good, but another area is that you want the parents to come into the school – other than mandatory attendance at the parent – teacher meetings.

Also it is essential that they understand the function of the meeting and what is going to happen so that they can get real benefit out of it. So pre-empt your parent – teacher meeting. Let the parents know what is coming up and what is going to be discussed. In that way, parents can be moved from mandatory attendance to a more voluntary presence…using the school as almost a social outlet for parents, giving them an opportunity to meet other parents and to interact, you know, as part of the general community and building a network of parents in the school, even simple things like having social events such as coffee mornings. It doesn't always have to revolve around a particular event. Once you get the ball rolling, you can keep it going, as it were.

 Keep it as a casual social event for parents to come to – can be an opportunity to raise a particular item or prepare a group in some way for an upcoming school event, for example, a parent – teacher meeting.

The advantage of things like that for parents to come to is that it is on a more casual basis and some parents prefer to do that. They might feel intimidated by a more formal structure – might prefer to attend in that kind of way, in a more easygoing kind of way. This removes any sense of intimidation. Then it becomes less of an issue if they have to meet a school staff member or chat with the principal, with a more human rather than a bureaucratic element to it and becomes less of a bureaucratic trip to the to a State body, which is how some might view it depending on their own experience.

Q. Do you think there are cultural factors, which must be taken into account, in the parent - school relationship?

Yes, parents lives outside of school effects their children's school lives. Structural factors are important and we need to be conscious of the issue of cultural competence. This is where we step in as well, in order to remind schools to be sensitive of any cultural issues that parents might be coming to the school with. Perhaps issues based on how their own experiences with school might have been.

Q. The parents level of competence in English…?

Yes, of course that must be taken into account.

Q. Have you come across situations where the child is used as an intermediary in cases where the parent may have a low level of competence in English.?

Yes. The child is caught between two worlds.

Also there are some other issues here as well so the power is with the child. In the toolkit there is a suggestion that a parent would volunteer to do this translation/interpreting. It is not recommended that a child be used in this way, particularly in certain circumstances.

Using your child as an interpreter is not always appropriate, for example, visiting a doctor, translating about the parent's condition or illness. So ideally it should be another adult. People are generous I have to say. So what we should do is to encourage the schools to identify people who would be willing to help. Find out where the language competencies are. Who speaks French? Who can help out here, with a migrant parent who doesn't speak English but may speak French. Make the connections. Actually in this way we create friendships. They meet and they talk. Maybe there is someone in the community who can speak a language and maybe a meeting can be set up.

The school becomes a resource as well and integration takes place. It is not just the school. It is about the community. It is about members of the established community and it is about new arrivals in the community. So we are trying to help schools with the toolkit with issues as they arise. For example "We have a parent-teachers meeting next week. We may need an interpreter for X. Another may volunteer to go to the meeting with that person to sit with that person throughout.

Q. It is very useful isn't it?

All that is in the report.

Q. What is in there, the report, in relation to language competence and in relation to language acquisition for adults?

At some schools they have organised English classes for parents. In the absence of resources, it is done on a voluntary basis. We cannot rely on voluntary input solely but we have to get

people to start it. If schools can come up with a solution. If the school can identify the need and come up with the solution. At the moment it is dependent on volunteers.

Q. In what ways is the recession impacting on migrant families for example, the cutbacks in EAL teaching?

Fidele: This is outside of the **Pathways to parental leadership** project and we do not comment on government cutbacks. All I can say is that our role is to highlight that the government has responsibility for society today and for future society. We advocate for supports and we publish reports showing how other countries deal with migrants, such as Germany, France and Canada and then it is up to the Government organisations to decide what to do. In the past few years this is what we do and highlight government actions today- actions which cause knock-on effects which will cost us dear in the future. This is the ICI perspective.

Geoff: In relation to volunteer parents, it is possible that we can think more along these lines. These can be built on and another thing is the creation of networks within the community. One of the things we suggested is for the schools to start looking at what is available in the community for parents and that could be any service. If you look at groups like *Failte Isteach.* It's only for the schools – the schools to give that information to parents and even interact more with these groups- encouraging more interaction. That can apply to areas other than English Language provision, areas like Youthwork, extra-curricular activities, sport activities and work together that way. Look at what the whole community is doing and work together that way.

Getting back to the point where children are used as interpreters, that is something that the schools flagged for us – a situation in the school such as a parent-teacher meeting where the child is translating for the parent- a conflict of interest where the child could be the focus of that meeting. Obviously the school was aware of the conflict of interest. In such situations

providing another volunteer would be preferable. There are going to be situations where if a meeting is to be sensitive, a volunteer might not be appropriate. There are going to be cases where the school might have to get a professional interpreter. Of course there are financial implications for schools in cases like this.

English language classes in the school-getting parents into the school for activities other than parent-teacher meetings, providing the courses in the school, that has been done in the schools and parents have responded to it. Parents facilitating the course for parents attending the class. Parents with particular skills creating connections. Organisations like Failte Isteach connecting more into the schools.

Q. Do you think that there is a dichotomy between the world of the school and the home of the child, -the English speaking world of the school and whatever language the family speak at home.

We have to be very careful addressing these issues in the toolkit. We didn't want to come across as telling schools how to research. Findings show that where children pick up the English language it is with their peers, on the street, in the school etc., The extent to which the home-language impacts on the child's acquisition of the English language is very much debatable I think. Definitely an interesting area to look at.

Fidele: Our toolkit is for teachers, in order to guide them to bring about the various activities, making schools aware of the complexities when you have a diverse population. If you, the school do it well, you can get parents to volunteer for the parent – teacher association, for leadership. This is mentioned in the toolkit. It is covered in as far as getting migrant parents to understand what the parents association is about. Information with the aim of involvement of parents, all leading to a situation where eventually you get the parents into the school, it is less of an issue for parents when they have to go in, because it is more familiar to them now – empowerment for the school and for the parents. this is what we are trying to achieve, to get

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teachers to try the recommendations and if they work you get the parents into the school. Parents who become ambassadors of change – that's the plan.

Information gathering, information giving, parents get the information and are presented with the choice of getting involved or otherwise and then can move on to become role models for others.

Yes

Geoff : Information for teachers as well as recognition of the barriers that might exist. Parent teachers associations -highlighting the barriers that might exist, for parents at that level. A tool kit for teachers and parents.

Q. Do you specify the barriers that exist out there for migrant parents so that schools can recognize the barriers?

We didn't explicitly spell out barriers to the schools as such because we didn't want to give the impression that these barriers were just applicable to migrant parents. language is a barrier for migrant parents but in a community most barriers can apply right across the board, not just specific to migrant parents.

For example all parents are potentially working long hours and this can impact on attendance at parent – teacher meetings. The cultural capital, which parents have and parents own experiences of school can absolutely apply to any parents.

Q. How do general immigration policies impact on the school life of children of migrants?

This is outside the project, which is about schools. However, as an organisation (ICI) we are examining some of the policies you refer to – family reunification, citizenship status etc…As an organisation we are addressing these things in our campaigns – the uncertainty for some families in situations where they are kept waiting.

Q. What are the implications of that type of uncertainty for the education of children in such families?

Geoff: It comes down to the whole area of student welfare, I suppose. Citizenship status or lack thereof has a huge impact on level of access to education, third level fees for example, barriers such as fees. Non-EU students fees way above what any parent should be expected to pay. In February we ran a seminar for students who are having such experiences.

Q. Is the issue of racism addressed in the toolkit, in the project?

Yes, we address the racism issue as part of student welfare. We definitely mention it but we didn't want to focus on it too much from the position of giving the impression that the school, the teacher wasn't doing these things because a lot of schools are. A lot of schools do have anti-racism policies. We mention racism and we point to a lot of resources. Here is some of the learning, some of the groups that run workshops. Here is potentially some of the ways of responding to it. It's definitely mentioned because it is a big factor and from the point of view of parental engagement obviously it is important that the school have a clear anti-racism policy – a practical policy which is applied, put into place and helps them when dealing with the school, which gives ease of mind to parents.

Q. Do you think that the anti-racism policy should be separate from the anti-bullying policy?

Yes, I do

The mental health of the student is going to be effected by issues both inside and outside of school, pressure at home etc..

Fidele: If the parents are aware of what is happening in the school and in the neighbourhood, then the migrant parents and parents of the established community can come together to discuss these, using the school as a place where they could together to air these if they could.

The next thing is those newsletters to get a visual presentation of what goes on in the school – to be inclusive of children of migrant children but not just in a tokenistic kind of way – but in an inclusive way, in order to remind people that the school is diverse.

Geoff: When schools are displaying photographs, a full range of diversity can be reflected – pictures showing the full range of people – graduation, prize giving day and so on – pictures which will present a message of integration.

Thank you for giving so generously of your time