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**INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON TRAUMA AND
RESILIENCE AMONG IMMIGRANT STUDENTS**

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Abstract

Schools with immigrant populations must find ways to support their students' success when there may be many culturally- and psychologically-diverse factors influencing their progress, including trauma and resilience. We asked whether there are causes and manifestations of trauma and resilience for immigrant students that can be identified through narratives and whether educators can develop supports for immigrants using research on trauma and resilience. Our purpose was to analyze narratives of immigrant students in U.S. schools, as well as review relevant studies, to guide development of school supports. We analyzed 28 stories of immigrant students (of equal gender) in New York City (Grades 8-12), originating from 10 countries across 4 continents using relevant research on trauma and resilience. Through coding and comparisons of themes, we found that the majority of students experienced trauma-related stressors of racism, xenophobia, loss of family, and language/social isolation while also describing resiliency-related factors, including peer interactions and family supports. The number of stressors and factors in the students' stories reflect the varied and complex nature of students' experiences in schools, suggesting that school responses to students must be equally varied, emphasizing the unique assets and needs of each. Part of a larger study on micro-, meso- and macro-analysis, we address the findings and offer implications for school policy and practices.

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Current State Of Public Schools In The U.S.

Public-school educators in the United States currently face the daunting and complex challenge of supporting an increasingly diverse—and increasingly unequal—population of school-aged students. More than half of U.S. cities have majority non-White populations, while Asian, Black, and Latino individuals and families have migrated to places where they have not traditionally lived (Frey, 2011). Of particular interest in this context are students who are first- or second-generation immigrants. The United States has about 40 million immigrants, the largest number in its history. Currently, between 20 and 25 percent of children and adolescents under the age of 18 in the United States are growing up in immigrant families—even though they may have been born here (Passel, 2011)—and almost two-thirds of this group are from Latin countries (APA Presidential Task Force, 2012). Nearly two-thirds of the Latinx student population are of Mexican origin; this is the largest and fastest-growing minority group in this country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Mather (2009) has projected that by 2020 one in three children will come from immigrant families; in metropolitan areas such as New York City and Los Angeles, the majority of public-school children already are of immigrant origin (Sirin, Gupta, Ryce, Katsiaficas, Suárez-Orozco & Rogers-Sirin, 2013).

Of particular note is the finding that Latinx immigrants in particular may enter school eager to learn but with time experience difficulty adjusting and become increasingly vulnerable to failure or dropping out. The longer this immigrant population is enrolled in U.S. public schools, there is a decline in their academic aspirations and achievement (e.g. APA Presidential Task Force, 2012; Green, Rhodes, Hirsch, Suárez-Orozco & Camic, 2008). We will argue here that the decline may reflect social, emotional and cultural stressors that are related to their school experiences, connecting this to research on trauma and resiliency of immigrants and immigrant students.

1.2. The Politics Of Diversity And The Stress On The “Other”

Educators frequently comment on how demographics fail to reflect the diverse needs of the students and how programs initiated to support identified groups in a school or district raise issues of equity in resources and result in the often unintended segregation of those receiving help. With fewer than 12 percent of English learners in the U.S. receiving instruction in their native language (Gándara, 2013), there has been an important and longstanding debate as to whether public funding should support education for immigrants in their first language at all. Historically, public-school systems in the U.S. have tended to equate educational programming for immigrant students to language instruction. Our understanding and support of immigrant students through their placement into a second-language program can limit the understanding of how race, gender and poverty might affect students' learning (Turner, 2015). Adelman and Taylor (2015) note that immigrants who are second-language learners often receive language instruction without having attention paid to their social and emotional needs.

The typical English instructional approach is to segregate the students, sometimes by school, by location within the school, or location in the classroom, to maximize their learning. Some have referred to the result of such segregation as an “ESL ghetto” (Faltis & Arias, 2013). While immigrant students have reported that there are benefits from such segregation in their first year—such as greater participation in a safe space, culturally sensitive teachers, a collective sense of belonging and the sharing of “social capital” about the school (schedules, after-school, discipline, etc., Faltis & Coulter, 2008)—they also experience linguistic and social isolation, labeling by others and often unequal instruction (Faltis & Arias, 2013).

In a more general sense, this disinclination to see the “whole student” reflects the gap between what Cochran-Smith (2003) called the “demographic imperative” of population shifts and the “demographic divide” within schools and districts, representing historical disparities (Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016). Similar gaps have occurred in research on diversity, such as characterizing the immigrant in a general way (as a language learner, a specific race or a member of a particular economic bracket), resulting in a “conceptual marginalization” that “...limits the scope of inquiry and tends to exclude immigrant youth who do not fit expected mainstream models...” (Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016, p. 157). Recent immigration research has focused on Latinx and Asian populations in the United States, for example, with less examination of African, Middle Eastern and European immigrants (Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016).

This process of marginalization, of “othering,” is addressed in the literature on schooling diverse populations. The process of becoming the “other” involves inequities in power in which the marginalized are demeaned, reduced to subhuman status, and/or racialized as part of a category or group—a practice that has taken place in the United States since colonial times (e.g. Azad, 2015; Prashad, 2005; Weheliye, 2014). This treatment can occur at institutional and interpersonal levels that, ultimately, can lead to internalized views of oneself as that “other.” With immigrant populations, being “essentialized” in this way, both in and out of school, can result in an incomplete understanding of the complexities and unique elements that make up human lives. In the work that we do with children and adolescents in high-needs schools (Thornburg & Mungai, 2012, 2016), immigrant status is primarily connected with categories that result in “othering”: language, religion, economic status and/or race. While the institutional and interpersonal dynamics differ for various immigrant groups and individuals, there is greater commonality in the responses of schools and parent communities to the “new” students: resistance to policies and programs, beliefs that these students are culturally or linguistically deficient, or “color-blind” beliefs (racial differences aren’t to be addressed) that undermine the best of intentions (Jones-Correa, 2008; Turner, 2015; Welton, Diem & Holme, 2013). A focus on diversity can result in the continuation of status hierarchies between groups by shifting attention from the educational needs of students of immigrant backgrounds, of color, and in poverty to meeting the needs of White and English-dominant families (Randolph, 2013; Turner, 2015).

What we are describing here appears to be of international proportions. The impact of massive immigration in other parts of the world, combined with individual countries’ historically xenophobic and racist beliefs, has created schools that are struggling to remedy the inequities of the past and the present. O’Connor (2014) chronicles the challenges in Irish schools, noting that immigrant children are often subjected to comments and taunts that are racist and xenophobic, impacting negatively on their well-being, affecting their social interactions with others, and contributing to self-segregation among Irish and

non-Irish students. Lindquist and Osler (2016) indicate that race and racism in educational research is avoided in Norway—even though there is an alignment of citizenship (“ethnic Norwegian”) and race (White). The researchers outline the pedagogical challenges of “othering” and cultural racism. Motti-Stefanidi (2015) studied school outcomes in Greece and argues that immigrant youth’s academic achievement (in contradiction to previous research) was worse than peers with Greek citizenship, irrespective of generation or ethnic group. In Australia, Priest and her associates (2013) note that little research has occurred in schools on race within peer relationships, victimization and bullying and the impact on learning. In a review of current literature, they note that there is a strong association between childhood depressive symptoms and racism.

The research underlying this paper is in response to these developments as the backdrop for looking at immigrant students’ experiences and how public schools are structured to help or hinder their growth. We join many in the belief that institutional and interpersonal prejudices toward immigrants in schools can help to explain their diminishing achievement and engagement in learning over time. Because of the current political climate and changes in policies toward immigrants and immigrant students, there is an even greater urgency for educators to find ways to make public schooling more culturally responsive. Using the perspectives offered by research on students’ experience of trauma and resiliency, in particular, we hope to add to the literature on how public schools and communities can better support all students and their families.

1.3. Understanding Trauma

Several studies have tied immigrant students’ challenges in schools to traumatic stressors, including post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2010). Bal and Perzigan (2013) reviewed studies of evidence-based interventions for immigrant students in several countries (the United States, Canada, Norway and Israel), noting that trauma is linked to “economic, political, and social adversity, and crossing borders,” (p. 7) that can lead to behavioral and cognitive difficulties such as “grief, anxiety, guilt, memory problems, and hyper-arousal” (p. 8). Immigrant children may suffer further trauma as a result of what they experience in school (Tummala-Narra, 2015). Often this takes the form of racial discrimination against immigrant groups (e.g. Bajaj, Ghaffar-Kucher & Desai, 2016; Rock, 2016). What had been understood as a negative experience, many researchers now view as a “race-based traumatic stressor” (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Polanco-Roman, Danies & Anglin, 2016)

For our study, we chose to pursue the more recent notions of trauma in terms of the individual’s subjective experience, allowing for a much broader range of circumstances that can potentially result in a traumatic response (e.g. NCTSN Core Curriculum on Childhood Trauma Task Force, 2012.). The notion of “complex trauma”—which is seen as exposure to multiple or prolonged traumatic events, often beginning in childhood and resulting in difficulties in emotional adjustment that can result in further traumatic events in adolescence and adulthood (Grasso, Green and Ford, 2013; National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2016)—conceptually reflects our predominant experience with immigrant students in schools. The general trends are clear: the more frequent and intense the adversities or events are, the more severe and broader the symptoms (Ford, Wasser and Connor, 2011; Ford, Elhai, Connor and Frueh, 2010). Grasso, Green and Ford (2013) note that these symptoms can include difficulties with emotional

stability, attention, impulse control, interpersonal relationships and self-attributions, physical symptoms, dissociation.

Another construction of trauma that informs our understanding of the experience of immigrants in school settings can be highlighted here, drawn from literary studies. Building on the metaphor of the “speaking wound” (Caruth, 1996), Dutro and Bien (2014) consider that students carry wounds from life experiences into school that both “connect closely to one’s own and provide a context for considering and analyzing inequities in how people are positioned” (p.3). They go further, arguing that these students are exposed to the “...racist, classist, sexist, and homophobic discourses...” in public schools which constitutes—creates—further trauma, reflecting the positions of scholars of “race and postcolonialism across disciplines around the traumatic individual, institutional, and systemic consequences of racism.” (Dutro and Bien, 2014, p.3).

1.4. Combating Trauma With Resilience

Assuming that the potential for additional trauma and traumatic stressors to students can occur within a school environment—whether through isolation, bullying, harassment or observing violence—educators have sought remedies to intervene or prevent further damage. Understanding “resilience” as a way to cope with trauma has been, for several decades, an important strategy researched in the literature across the disciplines (e.g. Agaibi & Wilson, 2005; Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Sinclair, Wallston & Strachan, 2016).

A central question that has been asked over the past several years is what factors might be associated with resilience during and after trauma occurs. The related question asked in the research is what factors (personal, social, support resources) might protect against the onset or later trauma. In school settings, these questions have been part of initiatives to look at how to support and strengthen resilience in students (Yeager & Dweck, 2012). In these studies, resilience is typically defined as the capacity for effective negotiation, adaption or management of significant sources of stress or trauma (Windle, 2010). “Bouncing back” from difficult experiences, in other words. The importance of resilience has been tied to the school success of children who are homeless, highly mobile (Masten et al, 2015), low-income students—particularly those of color (Williams & Portman, 2014)—and immigrant students, both longitudinally (Werner, 2013) and from a wide range of countries (Cebulko, K., 2014; Kumi-Yeboah, A., 2016; Watkinson & Hersi, 2014)

Some of the research proposed that there should be a person X situation model developed for the purposes of understanding the dynamism that may exist between potentially traumatizing events and the factors that support resilience in the face of them (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005; Richardson, 2002). Policy from the World Health Organization views resilience as something that embraces positive adaptation, with protective factors and assets that moderate risk factors and therefore reduce the impact of risk on outcomes (Windle, 2010). Pieloch, McCullough & Marks (2016) reviewed the factors that appeared to be supporting resiliency from 20 years of research. Organizing these factors into individual, family, school, community and societal categories, they found that social support (from friends and community), a sense of belonging, valuing education, having a positive outlook, family connectedness, and connections to home culture were critical.

Kuo (2014) reviews the current literature on the acculturation and coping of immigrants and refugees in the United States and cites resilience as a trait that is influential in how one goes about coping. Noting that researchers have paid little attention to culture and its impact on the processes and responses of coping, Castro and Murray (2010) tie coping to theory and research about resilience. The researchers conceptualize coping and cultural adjustment within a developmental framework over time and propose that resilience is an outcome of adaptation and coping with multiple stressors. Resilience is seen as a product of dynamic interactions among multiple individual, familial and community factors involved in the process of settlement undergone by newcomers as they enter into a new cultural context. The authors note that the dynamics of stress and coping are more prominent with challenging events such as racial/ethnic discrimination, illness and novel or unexpected things. Once an event has been appraised as an opportunity or a threat, resilient coping behaviors emerge during the adaptation phase outlined by the authors. These behaviors pertain to an immigrant's personal competence or skills that can enable them to attain desirable goals and favorable short- and long-term adaptation outcomes and can include, for example, an ability to effectively engage in decision-making, self-control and self-regulation.

Over the past two decades, a new understanding of resilience has emerged from the educational literature. "Educational resilience" refers to the capacity to succeed in school despite exposure to personal and environmental adversities (Wang & Gordon, 1994). Psychological research on educational resilience is still limited and typically focuses on identifying the individual characteristics of resilient students who thrive academically in the face of adversity (Williams & Bryan, 2013). Example characteristics include optimism, intrinsic motivation, assertiveness, the ability to solve problems, perceived social support, and having goals and aspirations (Ungar, 2005). As a result, these and other characteristics are targeted in school-related interventions, but as Williams and Portman (2014) point out—and parallel to the debate among researchers of resilience more generally—viewing resilience as a fixed trait rather than a combination of traits and external protective factors disallows any efforts to strengthen it in the face of risks and traumas.

Ni, Li and Zhao (2014) undertook a comparative study of Chinese and American middle school students' perceptions of resilience. They found that there are common resilience factors for both populations that include social supports with peers, teachers and parents and individual characteristics such as self-control, self-determination or goal determination. These factors could be enhanced to promote resiliency in all children, but their expression and interpretation—as well as the mechanisms for enhancing them—would depend on the culture. For example, academic self-efficacy was not as important for Chinese students as for American students. The researchers found that strong family relationships and Taoist and Confucianist approaches to adversity improved resilience among Chinese students.

2. Problem Statement

Schools with immigrant populations must find ways to support their students' success when there may be many culturally- and psychologically-diverse factors influencing their progress, including trauma and resilience. We therefore focus this study on the language of the diverse students themselves, their experiences in schools, offering expression and interpretation that may well provide cultural perspectives on the factors found to be important to trauma and resiliency. The distinction between the universal

themes of trauma and resilience as well as the factors contributing to each versus the ways in which cultural expression and interpretation of the two may vary greatly for students from diverse backgrounds. We wish to highlight this problem in our work here. Using the language of the students to better understand their experience and to infer what may be a function of their status as “diverse” is of particular interest, following the point made by Fruja Amthor and Roxas (2016).

3. Research Questions

Given our experience and the related literature, we began with two main research questions: 1) Are there causes and manifestations of trauma and resilience for immigrant students that can be identified through narratives?; and 2) Can educators develop supports for immigrants using research on trauma and resilience? We are assuming that psychological effects of trauma and resilience for immigrant students (both prior to and current in origin) need exploration. By reviewing international studies on immigrant students’ school adjustment—as well as in-depth analyses of narratives of immigrant students in U.S. schools—more comprehensive school supports can be developed.

4. Purpose of the Study

The present study, then, builds on what is known about the experience of immigrant students in schools in the U.S., using the perspectives of trauma and resilience theories in an effort to inform educators of ways in which schools and schooling can become more supportive of the diverse populations they serve. We believe that the tremendous variation in how trauma and resilience are understood—not to mention diversity—suggest a more exploratory approach to our work. While we have cited many studies here on factors related to trauma and resilience, relatively few have relied on stories written by immigrant students as a primary research source. Part of our decision was based on the sense that much of what we understand trauma and resilience to be is very contextual and specific to the individual. We decided to use the storytelling format rather than interviews as we felt there was a greater opportunity for the students to express themselves with an audience of peers—and in their own languages. Finally, we hoped to compare our findings to those of colleagues in other parts of the world, given the expanding number of migrating people and the challenges that schools face on a global scale to educate them.

5. Research Methods

5.1. The Students

We gathered narratives of 28 immigrant students (equal gender) in the New York City area (Grades 8–12) representing 10 countries: Brazil, Cuba, El Salvador, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Syria and Vietnam. All the students were enrolled in public schools in the area and all had arrived in the United States between June and December 2015. The stories were written in fall 2016 with the students participating on a voluntary basis in an after-school program that was intending to help them with their language and writing skills. The similarity in time frame in their arrival in New York was done to ensure,

to the greatest degree possible, that the historical moment in which the students came to this country was largely the same.

5.2. The Stories

The stories were from students writing about their school experiences in order to reflect on their lives, using a philosophy/pedagogy developed through Herstory, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization begun in 1996 that seeks to have individuals write and share their personal stories, thereby facilitating the individual's growth/purpose and strengthening ties to others, forming a community. The guided memoir-writing workshops ask the writers to attempt to put the listener in their shoes, creating reader empathy: "What is the most important experience you have had that you feel would help those in your school understand what it's been like for you?" What has emerged over the years is first-person but anonymous narratives telling stories of trauma and resilience. Bilingual facilitators have been trained to help the process along, as have leaders of high school and college programs, student interns and academics. The mission is to create a body of living literature that is meant to be shared, creating empathy, change and compassion—the role of literature everywhere. The students' stories were written in the language of their choosing and archived as part of the Herstory website.

5.3. The Analyses

Grounded theory is an inferential process in research that focuses on the process of creating an understanding rather than specific theoretical content (Patton, 2002). Grounded theory aligns well with the process of analyses of the selected stories. In grounded theory the first step for data analysis is to establish a method of coding the information to label important words, groups of words or passages. Verbatim quotes will be used to capture the essence of the writer's story.

The stories were read and analyzed by us for themes without any knowledge of the writers involved. The study described here primarily addresses the themes drawn from the stories, both inductively and through "mapping" the themes onto the factors identified in the extant literature on trauma and resiliency. Our review of the literature suggested to us a way to organize the factors into three somewhat crudely delineated areas: factors related to trauma or resiliency that are external to the student, factors related to trauma that are part of the student, and factors related to resiliency that are part of the student. In their literature review, Pieloch, McCullough & Marks (2016) organized factors into individual, family, school, community and societal categories, but we found that our organization might be more relevant to work with immigrant students in educational settings.

Each story was read and "coded" for the main themes by each of us separately, and we then compared our coding for each, identifying and reaching agreement on the themes per story. The elements that were identified for each were then tallied for the 28 stories and compared to the factors that we describe here to understand more fully how the students' experiences might guide educators to develop a stronger and safer educational environment.

6. Findings

After tallying the frequencies of the story themes, we looked at the most frequent across the 28 stories, and report on the four most frequent here. The most frequent theme (in 25 of 28 stories) was racism and xenophobia, reflected in bullying comments about the student's appearance and dress, threats of violence, exclusion based on race, or observation of these incidents. In four of the stories, the person making the comments was a teacher and involved a form of symbolic racism ("I've never had a student from your part of the world who tried their best in school.") It should be noted here that these stories included multiple examples of xenophobia and racism within a narrative—not just a single incident. Almost all the stories that included episodes of racism and xenophobia resulted in the students describing efforts to cope by hiding from bullies in behavior such as school avoidance or dissociating from the situation. A young woman describing the bullying about her hijab begins to write in the third person after describing these bullying remarks, for example, as if she is writing about someone else who she is observing.

The second most frequent theme in the stories involved family members—both the separation/loss of them and the relationship with them helping to support the students through a crisis. This was apparent in 21 of the 28 stories. It is notable here that relatively few (5 of the 21 stories) dealt with parents but, instead, addressed siblings and extended family members. Examples of this involved leaving grandparents, describing the support of a sister in stopping cutting oneself, and talking with a grandmother in one's home country who reminds the student about setting goals and having dreams.

The third most frequent theme involved the seeking out or experience of social relationships with peers to "normalize" the students' experience. This occurred in 19 of the 28 stories we read. In almost all cases, the scenarios offered emphasized the categorical differences that the students represented, whether by race, ethnicity or religion, but were resolved by some aspect of peer interactions that moved beyond the categories.

Finally, we noted a theme of isolation (both linguistic and social) in 17 of the 28 stories written by the students. A student described feeling alone in school in classes and in the hallways, feeling that no one cared. Another student attempted to find out information from other students, asking in Spanish, and having a hostile response back in English with no effort to help. The predominant emotional response in these experiences involved sadness on the part of the students.

There are two other aspects of the analyses that are significant and somewhat related. The majority of other themes noted in the stories (adversity experienced during immigration, social inequality, parent-child relations, the connections to home culture, the perceived school abilities, the relationships with adults in the school, the guilt over behavior, fear of others, the confusion over identity, the privilege/economic advantages of others and the initiative to help other people) were noted in only one or two of the stories. Secondly, no story pointed to a single event or theme as being the most important, but instead had multiple themes that suggested to us that one's experiences that are important to communicate through stories are multidimensional and complex.

7. Conclusion

As with other literature on immigrants in schools (Bajaj et al, 2016; Dutro, & Bien, 2014; Turner, 2015; Welton, Diem, & Holme, 2013,) racism and xenophobia appear to be quite prominent in our results. Most of the accounts in the stories involved multiple illustrations of bullying, threats or exclusion, with a few in the role of observers rather than victims. The examples of symbolic racism, as outlined by Rock (2016) and others are noteworthy, particularly in stories involving teachers. This serves as a reminder to the educational community that the ongoing political debates about immigration as an economic or security issue has a racial aspect to it in schools—if not in society overall. This finding is reflected in research from other countries where there is an acknowledgement of race and racism in education, including Ireland (O'Connor, 2014), Norway (Linguist & Osler, 2015) and Australia (Priest et al, 2013). Given the pervasive response of a desire to hide in the face of such prejudice, it is a question as to whether coping mechanisms associated with resiliency were viewed as potential responses on the part of these students. We would argue that the frequency and chronicity of this theme in the students' stories suggests that there needs to be continuing emphasis on addressing racism and xenophobia in schools in the U.S., not just ways to protect students from being the targets of such bigotry.

The importance of families—not simply parents—was made apparent in this research, and our results echo the work of Castro and Murray (2010), Ni, Li, and Zhao (2014), and Pieloch, McCullough and Marks (2016) in pointing to the importance of families in explaining the stress and efforts to cope that immigrant students experience. Frujas Amthor and Roxas (2016) have reviewed significant research suggesting that separation from extended families can be a major source of stress and trauma for immigrating students. We were struck by the number of stories written by the students coming from countries that frequently have a collectivist culture rather than an individualist one and view this as a critical element in educational efforts to support students' learning and growth.

The importance of peer relationships in strengthening resiliency against trauma is an important finding and agrees with most of the literature over the past decades on youth and schooling. We believe that the “normalizing” of school experience may speak to the acculturation process that is discussed at length in the research about immigrant students and families (Kuo, 2014) and what is often addressed in educational resources as an important component of responding to this population (Fruja Amthor & Roxas, 2016). This should be kept in mind with the primary emphasis for resources continuing on testing and accountability.

A great deal has been written about linguistic and social isolation of students from other countries (Adelman & Taylor, 2015; Faltis & Arias, 2013). There is a marginalization of immigrant students that frequently occurs in schools through formal programming and informal social interactions that has been the subject of reform efforts here (Turner, 2015) and abroad (O'Connor, 2014). Turner (2015) finds that well-meaning districts may try to market district diversity, promoting immigrant culture and ethnic mixing while keeping structural barriers in place. These inequalities involve programmatic separations (among teachers of language as well) as well as unequal instruction (Faltis & Arias, 2013).

The overall themes from these stories by immigrant students suggest that there are many elements that emerge for them as important in their school experience as opposed to isolated events. While it would be difficult to extrapolate from these stories to directly connect our findings to the developmental research

on trauma and resilience, it does suggest that some of the identified factors influencing the growth and learning of immigrant students in schools must be understood contextually and at several levels of influence in their lives over time. The impact of their schooling experiences, however, may contribute considerably to their stress and coping, which are part of the dynamics of trauma and resilience as discussed in the research (e.g. Dutro & Bien, 2014; Tummala-Narra, 2015). An obvious limitation of the method we used is that we could not assume that the students' stories were the most representative of what might be trauma or resilience. However, we felt that it was respectful of the cultural backgrounds and the social-emotional lives of the students to use what they had written as their own stories.

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