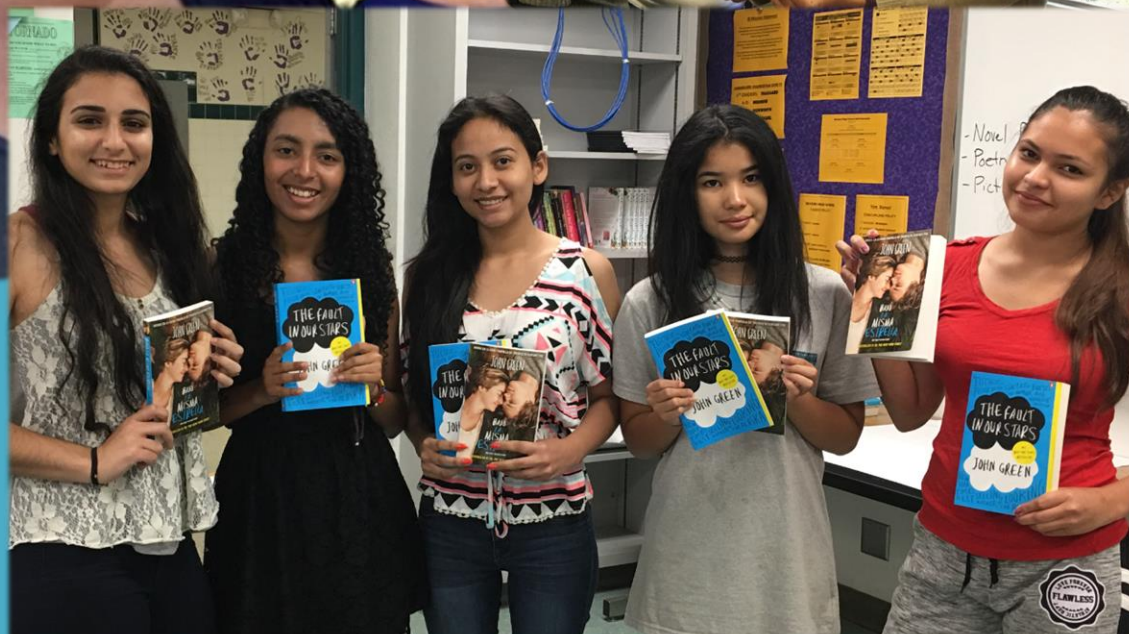


# Purposeful Conversations That Lead to Change



## **An Educator's Discussion Guide for Understanding Adolescent Immigrants: Moving toward an Extraordinary Discourse for Extraordinary Youth**



**Patricia Flint, M.Ed.**

# Discussion Guide

## A Note to the Reader

Dear Reader,

Having served in public education for over 20 years and in three states as a paraprofessional, teacher, instructional coach, and most recently as an assistant principal, I have supported a variety of students and staff, who were mainly monolingual, like myself. Currently, I am a doctoral student and graduate research associate who works on a grant supporting teachers of emergent bilinguals. It is through this grant work that I had the opportunity, and at the request of the high school students, to start a weekly book club with emergent bilinguals at a local high school. My weekly interaction with these high school students is what led me to this book. While reading this book, I couldn't help but think how helpful it would have been to have read and discussed this while I was still working in the public school setting, to know these personal stories that are so different from my own. The perspectives offered are compelling and relevant and allow an individual whose own experiences are lacking in diversity to have a glimpse into the hopes and challenges for these immigrant youth.

In the ever-changing world of student populations, it is my hope that administrators and teachers will hear the optimism and desire to achieve in the “voices” of the students presented here and see parallels to their own schools and classrooms. I encourage you to take this book a chapter at a time in order to have meaningful reflection and conversations. Use the discussion questions and resources offered in this guide to help challenge the status quo in your own classrooms and schools. I believe that the students' optimism and desire to achieve is what unites us all, regardless of ethnicity, geographic location, or age.

Sincerely,

*Patricia Flint*

Patricia Flint, M. Ed.

Special Education Doctoral Student

ELLevate Grant Graduate Research Associate



# Discussion Guide

## Introduction

1. When you hear the word immigrant, what images come to mind? Does the word have a negative, neutral, or positive connotation in our society? In your community? In your school? What implications does this have for education? Look at these images that depict various connotations of immigration in our society: The following is a Google document that has images, videos, and articles related to the topic of immigration, past and present to enrich your discussions. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1J8BV4iCAGf-etMI0pQQlkwwrugSOdFYIWOrs9fPIZRw/edit>
2. Remember the larger definition of “children of immigrants”—a child with at least one foreign-born parent. There are many subterms we can use to further describe this group and although the exact definitions vary depending on one’s perspective, generally in the social sciences we use these terms:
  - a. 1st generation: Someone who receives most of their initial education and socialization in another country and then emigrates (come from their country of birth) to another country
  - b. 1.5 generation: Someone who is born in another country but receives most of their education and socialization in the new country
  - c. 2nd generation: Someone who is born in the country they reside in, but whose parents are born in another country, thus, they may speak another language at home or continue many of the cultural practices of their parents’ country.

Think of students in your school that fit each of these categories. How are they alike and different? When does it benefit us to consider this group as a whole and in what circumstances would it be best to think of them separately? In this book, the focus is specifically on 1st generation newcomers yet the principles learned from them can apply to other immigrant students. Here is a video in which students answer the question: What is an immigrant? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDEOQ8qlqMM>

3. Think of an immigrant student you have taught, past or present, and list all the strengths s/he possess.
4. Can you share that student’s story with a colleague?
  - a. Where is s/he from?

# Discussion Guide

- b. Why is s/he here, how long have s/he lived here, whom do s/he live with, any siblings, likes/dislikes, interests, etc.?
5. What role do you play in these students' lives as a stakeholder? Do you see yourself as a stakeholder?
6. How does your school need to change its perspective of the word immigrant?

# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 1: Adolescent Immigrants in School and Society

1. How can we help our students “constructively unleash their full potential to the benefit of all Americans” (pg. 2), our community, our school, our class, etc.?
2. Have, Can, Should you provide a space for writing without judgment/grading?  
(Journaling, digital or paper, that is shared between teacher and student)
3. Who holds the most capital, cultural or social, in your classroom? Does that need to change? If yes, how can you change that? If no, how can you build on it for the good of those students, your whole class, your school, your community, etc.?
4. Watch this video titled: New Immigrants Share Their Stories about a high school for newcomers and think about this question: “How does our thinking perpetuate the status quo for [immigrant youth]” (p. 10)? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33OINi3xVbc>
5. Watch this video of Dr. Patricia Gándara explaining how we might change our perspectives of immigrant students in the U.S.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NEI03mvnBM&t=1919s&list=PLIigJtUGHmepkSXEQqOnONDF935Krb5BY&index=3>.



# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 2: Miguel

1. Watch this video titled: The Life of an Unaccompanied Minor in L.A.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaBfyVFHJ0g> and discuss the following question:  
How can we leverage Miguel's positive attitude and work ethic to benefit all our students? How do you foster or nurture this attitude because all students need to be that positive and driven?
2. How do we keep students, like Miguel, trying when they don't pass the required tests the first, second, or third time?
3. What do you think is unique to Miguel's story that propels his optimism and drive to reach his goals?
4. What other resources can we provide to students like Miguel to help them pass the required tests?
5. Watch this trailer from I Learn America and focus on Brandon, the young man from Guatemala: <http://ilearnamerica.com/> and <http://ilearnamerica.com/the-film/>
6. These texts can be used to further understand this topic and the perspectives of these students :
  - a. Brown, S. (2014). *Caminar*. Somerville, Massachusetts: Candlewick Press. This book of narrative poetry in English explains some of the historical situations in Guatemala that still affect people today.



- b. This recent news story explains reasons for modern day Guatemalan migration:  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/nothing-us-here-deported-guatemalans-plan-return-u-s-n858231>

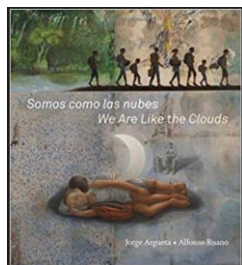
# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 3: Alejandra

1. What can we do to make unaccompanied minor students feel safe and accepted? What are other ways of providing a connection to home and the new life besides Facebook?  
Seesaw is a free App that allows for a school to home connection. The student or teacher can upload the work and the parent, once they have accepted the invitation from the teacher to join, receives an email alert that a new entry has been made to their student's account. Then the parents can access their student's work at any time.
2. Is providing relevant literature option (mirror and windows) to facilitate discussions, sharing, and acceptance purposeful in your classroom?
3. Use Padlet (a free app) to create discussion boards (boards can include images, journaling, videos, multilingual options, etc.) for sharing from readings of novels, articles, videos, etc.
4. Read these books to learn more about unaccompanied minors:
  - a. Adolescent novel in chapters: Díaz, A. (2016). *The only road*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

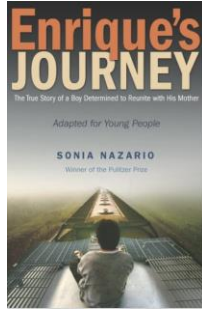


- b. Illustrated bilingual poetry: Argueta, J., & Ruano, A. (2016). *Somos como las nubes: We are like the clouds*. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books.



# Discussion Guide

- c. Novel about a true story: Nazario, S. (2013). *Enrique's journey: The true story of a boy determined to reunite with his mother*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press.



5. Here are some websites to view statistics and policies surrounding immigration:
- <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/homesec/R43599.pdf>
  - <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/us-immigration-policy-program/rising-child-migration-united-states>
6. This is a reader friendly guide related to immigration policies:  
<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/guide-children-arriving-border-laws-policies-and-responses>



# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 4: Lay Su Aung

1. Do you know any of your students' dreams/aspirations? If yes, how can you/we help them? If no, why not? What can you do about this?
2. "We survived", what is your "we survived"?
3. How would you finish the statement: Well, I survived \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What/who helped you overcome this?
5. How can you support Lay's literacy development in any of her home languages?
6. Here are four videos surrounding the issues refugees face. I suggest breaking up into small groups to watch, discuss, and share the information and perspectives gained from viewing.
  - a. Refugee Crisis: The Syrians Abandoning Europe:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NqrKzodZ10>
  - b. A Global Refugee Crisis- 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct5OesIji3U>
  - c. Surviving One of the Deadliest Routes to Europe: Refugees at Sea:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPelTu3iuqc>
  - d. A Boat Carrying 500 Refugees Sunk at Sea. The Story of Two Survivors:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/melissa\\_fleming\\_a\\_boat\\_carrying\\_500\\_refugees\\_sunk\\_at\\_sea\\_the\\_story\\_of\\_two\\_survivors](https://www.ted.com/talks/melissa_fleming_a_boat_carrying_500_refugees_sunk_at_sea_the_story_of_two_survivors)
7. Below are websites that offer refugee statistics:
  - a. <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/statistics/>
  - b. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/05/key-facts-about-the-worlds-refugees/>
  - c. <http://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>
  - d. <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/stats>
8. Novel about a refugee story: Gratz, A. (2017). *Refugee*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.



# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 5: Aisha

1. Do you know “a central part” of your students’ upbringing, e.g. religion?
2. What values are they being taught?
3. Are these values in conflict with your own? Does that even matter?
4. What strategies did Aisha’s teachers use to support her English development? (some possible answers could include: 1:1 tutoring during lunch, read alouds, gave her an award, used culturally relevant texts, made her feel smart, etc.)
5. Do you see yourself replicating any of these strategies?
6. Here are two videos on the importance of building relationships with all students and one video on teaching strategies for SIFEs. I suggest breaking up into small groups to watch, discuss, and share the information and perspectives gained from viewing.
  - a. Rita Pierson Relationships: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw29ecpDpoM>
  - b. Every Kid Needs a Champion:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFnMTHhKdkw>
  - c. Supporting SIFE with Developing Literacy: Literacy Centers for Multilingual Students: <https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/literacy-centers-sife-bridges>
7. Great website with helpful ideas for: Motivating Language Learners to Succeed:  
[http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/other-serial-publications/compleat-links/compleat-links-volume-5-issue-2-\(june-2008\)/motivating-language-learners-to-succeed](http://www.tesol.org/read-and-publish/journals/other-serial-publications/compleat-links/compleat-links-volume-5-issue-2-(june-2008)/motivating-language-learners-to-succeed)

# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 6: Nathan

1. How can we ensure each student has a same language partner even if there isn't one in the class or school? What other ways can we use to facilitate this?
2. How can we set up a new-to-school/country buddy/mentor for each of these students?
3. Interesting read about newcomer students and soccer: St. John, W. (2009) *Outcasts united: A refugee soccer team, an American town*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau.
4. Consider how being highly literate in French helped Nathan in school. How is this different from Aisha (chapter 5) and Lay Su Aung (chapter 4)?
5. Spoiler alert based on personal experience: translation devices don't always work perfectly. Watch this video for an example: Google Translate Songs with Anne Hathaway: <https://youtu.be/4GC83w0z0ec>
6. Read this article from Education Week about mentoring students: <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/10/18/to-fill-a-mentoring-gap-schools-get.html>

# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 7: Andrés

1. Who fits the definition of a transnational student? Read this Education Week blog post before discussing your answers/thoughts:  
[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding\\_common\\_ground/2016/08/who\\_are\\_transnational\\_students.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding_common_ground/2016/08/who_are_transnational_students.html)
2. Would it benefit these students (transnational) and/or all students to allow for academic vocabulary in multiple languages in the classroom? On word walls? In student notes?
3. What about allowing students to be translators? What are the pros and cons?
4. On page 80 of this chapter, Andrés talks about one of his teachers who attempted to speak to him in Spanish. Consider the impact on your students if you learned a few words and/or phrases in their languages. What are the pros and cons?
5. What does it mean to be educated? Does the meaning vary by culture? Watch this video before discussing your thoughts: How to Escape Education's Death Valley:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_how\\_to\\_escape\\_education\\_s\\_death\\_valley?referrer=playlist-tv\\_special\\_ted\\_talks\\_education](https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_how_to_escape_education_s_death_valley?referrer=playlist-tv_special_ted_talks_education)
6. Great video on using word walls and other visuals:  
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/independence-for-ells-bridges>
7. Watch this video on using the tool Skype Translator and discuss how it could benefit students like Andrés: Skype Translator Preview:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G87pHe6mPOI>

# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 8: Sara

1. Can we give our students voice and choice in the literature we use? Why/why not? Read these brief articles before discussing your ideas:

a. <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/five-strategies-more-voice-choice-students-rebecca-alber>

b. <https://www.edglossary.org/voice/>

2. How can we implement voice and choice and still teach the ELA and language standards? Great article to add to your conversation:

[https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning\\_deeply/2014/08/voice\\_and\\_choice\\_in\\_the\\_classroom.html](https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_deeply/2014/08/voice_and_choice_in_the_classroom.html)

3. How can we ensure these students have a language buddy or a safe avenue to grow and develop language skills in all their languages?

# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 9: Extraordinary Youth

1. Watch this documentary style video that shows the research on academic supports for ELs by featuring actual teaches, students, and administrators:

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/events/archived\\_events/2017/september\\_1\\_3.aspx](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/events/archived_events/2017/september_1_3.aspx)

2. “Are we prepared as educators, to take the necessary actions that might allow them to thrive?” (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008, p. 96)
3. What are their capital? Their needs?
4. In what ways have we nurtured or stifled their strengths and potential? What changes do/can we need to make?



# Discussion Guide

## Chapter 10: Toward an Extraordinary Discourse

1. “The relationship between language and experience never appears more clearly than in crisis situations in which the everyday order... is challenged... situations which call for an extraordinary discourse” (Bourdieu, 1972/1977, p. 170). In reflecting upon this quote answer the following question: Is it okay to change/alter the traditional power dynamic, e.g. teacher as sole or primary giver of knowledge?
2. Is it okay to alter the literature sources we use?
3. Should we ask for input from the students on the choice of literature offered in our classrooms?
4. The rule of education as it currently exists in our society, state, district, school, and your classroom: Who determines its worth? Who holds the cards?
5. Watch this video on the use of translanguaging in a science classroom and discuss how translanguaging can be used in your classroom and what the benefits might be:  
<https://www.teachingchannel.org/video/dual-language-science-lesson>
6. After watching this video, What Do You Think When You Look at Me? reflect, silently or share out, on your assumptions about people that are different from you.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzkFoetp-\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzkFoetp-_M)