

A Qualitative Investigation of the Factors that Enhance, Impede, and Require Attention for the School Success and Engagement of At-Risk Newcomer Students

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Little is known about best practices to support newcomer students with a history of emotional, behavioural, or learning challenges in their pursuit of school success and engagement. The Enhanced Critical Incident Technique was employed to explore the helping, hindering, and desired practices among nine teachers who have successfully supported at-risk newcomer youth in their educational pursuits in Canada. Results revealed 64 helping and 43 hindering factors as well as 27 wish list items related to participants' experiences of supporting newcomer students in their school success and engagement. Recommendations are made at three levels: individual, curricula, and systemic.

On sait peu de choses sur les meilleures pratiques pour soutenir les élèves nouvellement arrivés et ayant des antécédents de problèmes émotionnels, comportementaux ou d'apprentissage dans leur quête de réussite et d'engagement scolaires. La méthode améliorée des incidents critiques a été utilisée pour explorer les pratiques positives, négatives et désirées chez neuf enseignants qui ont soutenu avec succès des jeunes nouveaux arrivants à risque dans leur parcours scolaire au Canada. Les résultats ont révélé 64 facteurs positifs et 43 facteurs négatifs ainsi que 27 éléments désirés liés aux expériences des participants en matière de soutien aux élèves nouvellement arrivés dans leur réussite scolaire et leur engagement. Des recommandations sont formulées à trois niveaux : individuel, curriculaire et systémique.

Newcomers—immigrants, refugees, and non-permanent citizens—have contributed immensely to cultural diversity in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017). Over the 21st century, the Canadian population has grown by a quarter of a million newcomers with permanent resident status—the largest numbers of which resettled in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta (de Hass et al., 2020). In 2018, there were 38,683 documented newcomers in Alberta, 90% of whom were between 15 and 24 years old (Alberta Government, 2018), making them one of the fastest-growing populations across the province's educational system (Ngo, 2009). As such, newcomer youth play a pivotal role in the continued evolution and success of Canadian society (Banks et al., 2016).

There is a vast body of literature that pertains to the experiences of newcomer students, which includes a small number of studies related to the experiences of at-risk students. However, to date there is a dearth of research that examines the intersection of the two: at-risk newcomer students (ARNS). Currently, there is no clear consensus on what constitutes being *at-risk*, and therefore no scholarly definition of ARNS. The Canadian Education Statistics Council (2001) symposium report suggested that an at-risk youth can be loosely defined as someone who has a higher probability of negative developmental outcomes, difficulties in social adaptations, academic success, and mental health. Further, Don Brown (2011) asserted that

when a child begins leaning towards behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions that are risky, they are behaving in a fashion that practitioners might diagnose as *at-risk*. Such behaviors are indicative of children who are having problems in school: whether socially, academically, emotionally, or psychologically. (para. 2)

Across various conceptualizations, there is some agreement regarding the risk factors that leave newcomer youth vulnerable to adversities.

In this research, ARNS were defined as first- or second-generation newcomer youth with a history of behavioural, emotional, and/or learning challenges in high school, which may put them at-risk of experiencing further mental-health and social challenges. The purposeful inclusion of first- and second-generation newcomers was due to the similarities identified across these groups. Specifically, multiple risk factors impact the academic success and school engagement of first- and second-generation newcomer students in similar ways, particularly when compared to native-born youth. Further, much of the research pertaining to the experiences of newcomer youth either includes both first- and second-generation participants or does not specify their generational status (Hamilton et al., 2009; Pivovarova & Powers, 2019; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007; Rumbaut, 2004; Stevens et al., 2015).

One of the contexts identified as a major determinant of newcomer youths' success in Canada is that of the high school setting (Naraghi et al., 2020). For most newcomer youth, first- and second-generation alike, entrance into the school system is their first point of contact with the culture of the receiving society (Gallucci & Kassan, 2019). Newcomer students themselves have identified schools as the formative environment in which their social, emotional, and academic transition takes place (Li, 2010; Stodolska, 2008). Thus, at the heart of newcomer youths' positive personal and academic integration lies their experience of school success and engagement within their respective schools (Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, et al., 2010; Suárez-Orozco & Michikyan, 2016). School success and engagement—defined as active academic achievement, the forging of meaningful connections at school, and the degree to which students are connected to classroom activity (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2015; Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, & de Lardemelle, 2010)—can be a social and emotional buffer that contributes to newcomer youth's positive transition into a post-secondary education, future career success, societal contribution, and overall ability to avoid negative health behaviours (Benner & Kim, 2009; Gallucci & Kassan, 2019; Medvedeva, 2010; Ngo, 2012; Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009).

Teachers have been shown to be instrumental in newcomer youths' school success and engagement (Ngo, 2012). Scholarship has shown that teachers can either help or hinder the process of school integration (Gallucci & Kassan, 2019). Teachers are able to provide academic guidance and emotional support to newcomer youth, promoting their sense of belonging and increasing their academic performance (Brown, 2014; Walsh et al., 2010). However, there is

limited research that targets effective teaching practices to support ARNS who are vulnerable to being unsuccessful in school—and thus at higher risk of future mental health and socio-emotional challenges. Given the ongoing increase of newcomer youth to Canada, it is critical to deepen our understanding of the current methods teachers use to support ARNS in the school system. Therefore, the aim of this study was to develop a multi-layered, contextual understanding of the practices that helped, hindered, and would be desirable to teachers in supporting ARNS in high schools in Canada.

School Success and Engagement

There are many factors that influence newcomer youths' school success and engagement, and the relationships between them are complex (Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, & de Lardemelle, 2010). Newcomers' complex linguistic, acculturative, and psychosocial needs have been shown to challenge the K–12 education system in developing competence when working with culturally diverse families (see Ngo, 2012). Further, newcomer students themselves often report difficulty understanding the expectations, culture, and curriculum within their schools (Kilbride & Anisef, 2001). These difficulties can be exacerbated by inadequate preparation and proper orientation upon integration into the school setting—leaving many newcomers at a disadvantage when navigating school practices and norms (Gallucci & Kassan, 2019). Insufficient support can also prove detrimental to students who have had limited formal education and can lead to a lack of motivation and classroom engagement (Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009). Disengagement is further influenced by inappropriate grade placements, resulting in students feeling over- or under-challenged (Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, et al., 2010; Wilkinson, 2004).

English proficiency is another factor that impacts newcomer youths' academic performance and social wellbeing (Li, 2010; Ngo, 2009, 2012; Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, et al., 2010; Suárez-Orozco & Marks, 2016). In fact, 118,194 newcomer students required English Language Learning (ELL) instruction in Alberta in the 2017–2018 school year (Alberta Education, e-mail response to inquiry, 2019). For students with limited English knowledge upon arrival, the establishment of a level of proficiency necessary for academic success can take five to seven years (Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, et al., 2010). Moreover, gaining English proficiency is further compounded by systemic challenges associated with ELL classes, which include a) decisions regarding language instruction and services for newcomer students are left to the discretion of individual school administrators and not to the youths and their families (Ngo, 2009), b) newcomer students often find ELL classes ineffective (Gallucci & Kassan, 2019; Li, 2010; Stodolska, 2008), and c) students lack motivation to excel in these classes as they do not translate into course credit toward graduation (Fresh Voices Youth Advisory Team, 2013; Naraghi, 2013).

Unfortunately, there are many barriers that newcomer students face across different school systems in Canada, including inappropriate grade placement, pre-migration trauma, social isolation, and unique linguistic, educational, and social challenges. (Gallucci & Kassan, 2019; Ngo, 2012). Further, ethnic and cultural harassment by peers in the school setting can lead newcomer youth to engage in violent behaviours including, verbal harassment, street fighting, and damaging property (Özdemir et al., 2019). According to a 2017 report by Dunbar and Public Safety Canada, when newcomer youths have disproportionately higher rates of negative experiences at home, school, and in the community, it can result in the breakdown of their identities and to a lack of a sense of belonging. These adverse experiences can result in negative self-internalizations and can

lead to disempowering perceptions of one's ethnic and Canadian identities. To fill these social identity voids, Ngo and colleagues (2017) suggested that newcomer youth may seek membership in alternative social networks with other socially disconnected individuals, which has the potential to evolve into more entrenched criminal gangs.

Scholarship has shown that leaving social, emotional, and academic barriers unaddressed leaves newcomer students at a higher risk of developing depression and anxiety, disengaging or withdrawing from school, and facing future difficulties such as welfare dependency and teenage pregnancy (Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2013; Stermac et al., 2012). These negative health determinants are even more likely to occur for newcomer youth who hold lower socio-economic status, have fractured family structures, have a lack of parental oversight due to long work hours, are exposed to drugs and delinquency, have emotional and behavioural dysregulation difficulties, and have relatively low levels of dominant language proficiency (Klein & Shoshana, 2020).

The Role of Teachers

Of the literature that investigates how newcomer youth have overcome barriers within the school system, a common finding is the pivotal role of teachers (Areepattamannil & Freeman, 2008; Gallucci & Kassan, 2019; Kassan et al., 2019; Ngo, 2012; Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, & de Lardemelle, 2010). Newcomer youth themselves have identified teachers as a source of support that can facilitate their sense of belonging, help them build community within their school setting, and provide assistance in achieving their academic goals (Brown, 2014; Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009). A teacher's ability to believe in newcomer youths' academic potential, build on their existing knowledge bases and interests, and have knowledge of their cultural backgrounds all positively impacted their school success and engagement (Göbel & Preusche, 2019; Sleeter, 2008). Cultivating supportive and empathic relationships has also been shown to support newcomer youth in building community, developing their personal identities (Roffman et al., 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2017), and increasing their comfort in seeking academic support (Brinegar, 2010). Furthermore, these relationships have been reported to increase newcomer students' physical health, self-esteem, life-satisfaction, and high school completion, as well as decrease their levels of smoking, depressive symptoms, suicide ideation, risk taking behaviour, and gang membership (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005a, 2005b; LaRusso et al., 2008; Vollet, et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, teachers often report challenges that interfere with their ability to establish supportive relationships, including general time constraints, trouble understanding diverse newcomer students' needs, and difficulty forming intercultural relationships (Patel & Kull, 2011; Roxas & Roy, 2012). This experience holds particularly true when working with ARNS in the classroom. Specifically, barriers that impede teachers' ability to support these students in traditional classroom settings include a) uncertainty related to teaching newcomer youth with unique learning needs due to previous traumatic experiences (Brown et al., 2006; Kanu, 2008; Stewart, 2009, 2011); b) a lack of information regarding students' histories prior to their arrival in their classrooms (Binhas & Yaknich, 2019; MacNevin, 2012; Stewart, 2011); c) insufficient cultural knowledge about the minoritized and newcomer students they teach (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020); and d) inadequate professional development opportunities to better learn to support various newcomer students' learning abilities, socioemotional needs, and styles (MacNevin, 2012). An investigation among pre-service teachers demonstrated that participants had to draw on their own experiences of being newcomers to Canada in order to assist students in the

classroom, as their formal training had not equipped them with the necessary knowledge and skills (Nathoo, 2017).

Rationale

A review of the literature suggests that schools are a very impactful environment for ARNS during their process of integration. Accordingly, schools have an ethical responsibility to respond to and support the complex educational and socioemotional needs of ARNS. Although the need has been identified, teachers are currently struggling to meet it and report a pressing desire for more support (Binhas & Yaknich, 2019). Considering the importance of the school experience for ARNS' success and the centrality of the role of teachers within it, the present study turned to teachers who have been successful in supporting this group, despite reported challenges. Specifically, an Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT; Butterfield et al., 2009) was employed to examine teachers' experience in supporting the success of ARNS by answering the following research question: *What are the factors that influence the school success and engagement of newcomer students with a history of behavioural, emotional, and/or learning challenges?* That is, the present study sought to further understand the teaching practices that helped, hindered, and would have been desirable to the school success and engagement of ARNS—newcomer youth with a history of behavioural, emotional, and/or learning challenges in high school, that potentially make them at-risk of experiencing further mental-health and social challenges.

Method

Research Design

This study employed the ECIT (Butterfield et al., 2010; Butterfield et al., 2009) to guide data collection and analysis. Based on the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) developed by John Flanagan (1954), the ECIT is a method that gathers direct observations of human behaviour in a procedural manner that enhances their usefulness to solve practical problems and develop models that explain broad phenomena. The ECIT is used to explore factors that help and hinder the “effective performance of some activity or the experience of a specific situation or event” (Butterfield et al., 2009, p. 266). Additionally, it builds on the CIT (Flanagan, 1954) with the addition of contextual interview questions aimed at clarifying the background of research participants, a set of nine credibility and trustworthiness checks, and the inclusion of questions about potential factors, or wish list items, that would have further helped participants in achieving their goals (Butterfield et al., 2009). The present study investigated teaching practices that helped, hindered, and would have been desirable to the school success and engagement of ARNS.

Procedure

Following ethical approval at both the university and school board level, participants were recruited via information sessions and flyer advertisement in school settings that see high enrollment of ARNS. Both criterion and snowball sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015) were employed to recruit nine high school teachers in a large, western, metropolitan city in Canada. The majority of participants recruited were retired teachers, which is likely a product of snowball sampling. Advertisements and requests to recruit currently employed teachers in addition to willing and

eligible retired participants did not lead to additional enrolment. The authors hypothesized that limited resources for active and repeated recruitment in schools and a lack of time and resources experienced by potentially overworked, currently employed teachers resulted in challenges attaining a more complementary recruitment. Data collected ceased at this number, as no new information was emerging from the qualitative interviews (Butterfield et al., 2009; Schwandt, 2015).

Participants represented a wide range of ages, ethnicities, work positions within the school system, and held between 2- and 30-years' experience working with ARNS (see Table 1 for participant demographics). Teachers were selected as the point of entry into exploring the practices that aid ARNS in their educational process as they are uniquely positioned to speak to the organizational structures and practices that provide students with a developmentally appropriate space to feel both challenged academically and connected personally (Brinegar, 2010). To be eligible for the study, teachers had to have worked directly with ARNS who experienced at least two of the following challenges prior to beginning their work with them: poor grades, failing classes, suspensions from school, missing classes on a consistent basis, disengagement from school and/or classroom activities, and/or reception of support services for behavioural or emotional concerns. Additionally, teachers had to have witnessed improvement of the academic challenges experienced by the students as a result of their support through "yes/no" self-report in at least two of the following areas: improved grades, improved attendance, passing classes, decreased suspensions, increased in-class engagement, extinction of behavioural challenges previously experienced by student. This study centered on teachers' experience of helpful and hindering practices with ARNS rather than on to the specific elements characterizing

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Information by Participant #

Participant # (N=9)	Age	Gender	Self-Identified Ethnicity	Level of Education	Related Positions Held (Length of Position Held)
301	55	Female	Ukrainian	M.A.	ESL teacher (11 years); ELL systems specialist (5 years); Assistant Principal (2 years)
302	62	Female	Iranian	Masters of Law	Teacher (25 years)
303	35	Female	Part Iranian, and English	B.Ed.	Teacher-Inclusionary Practice (6 months); Learning Strategist (2 years); Teacher (13 years)
304	54	Male	-	M.A.	Teacher (16 years); Administrator (5 years); (specifically working with newcomer youth: 2 years)
305	50	Female	English, French, Norwegian	M.Ed.	Learning Leader for ELL & Int'l students (23 years)
306	59	Female	Scottish, Irish, English	M.A.	Classroom Teacher; ESL Teacher; ESL Specialist; ESL System Administrator (36 years combined)
307	68	Female	English, Irish	M.A.	Teacher (30 years)
308	58	Female	German, Irish, English	B.Ed./DipEd ELL	ELL Lead Teacher; Substitute Teacher (17 years combined)
309	64	Female	-	M.Ed.	Teacher; Learning Leader for ESL Department, (9 years combined)

students' success. This distinction is reflected in the Results and Discussion sections below, highlighting descriptions of students' successes and challenges brought forth by teachers' actions only anecdotally.

Interested individuals were asked to contact the research coordinator via email. One-on-one in-person or Skype qualitative interviews were conducted, and audio recorded. Interviews ranged between 60–90 minutes and were subsequently transcribed verbatim. In accordance with the interview fidelity check outlined by Butterfield et al. (2005), every third interview was shared with the principal investigator to ensure that the ECIT methodology was being followed and that all questions in the interview protocol were thoroughly explored without using leading questions.

Data Collection

The interview protocol followed established CIT (Flanagan, 1954; Woolsey, 1986) and ECIT (Butterfield et al., 2009) interview formats (see Appendix A). It was developed based on scholarship pertaining to youth and migration. Participants were first introduced to the purpose of the study and were given examples of instances that would constitute academic success and school engagement, as well as incidents that would exemplify challenges in school. Participants were first asked contextual questions to elicit their general impressions of the types of challenges faced by ARNS prior to beginning their work together. Subsequently, they were asked to identify critical incidents (CI) that both helped and hindered ARNS' school success and engagement, as well as other factors that would have further helped them in their work with the youth (i.e., wish list items; WL items). After the fifth interview was completed, the interview protocol's contextual questions were adjusted (see Schwandt, 2015). This decision was made in response to the evolution of the interviewing process in order to enhance participants' distinction between their experience with ARNS and their experiences with newcomer or Canadian youth who were not necessarily at risk. To ensure participants' responses remained focused on ARNS specifically, the interviewer frequently reminded participants of the definition of ARNS throughout the interview.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed established steps outlined by Butterfield et al. (2009) for an ECIT study, including 1) selecting a frame of reference (e.g. to develop guidelines and recommendations for effective support for ARNS with emotional, behavioural, and learning challenges); 2) identifying helping and hindering CIs as well as WL items, and subsequently grouping them into categories; and 3) establishing the appropriate level of specificity to be used in reporting the results (Flanagan, 1954; Woolsey, 1986). Extraction of CIs and WL items and subsequent placement into categories proceeded in sets of three randomly selected transcripts at a time, yielding three sets of three transcripts for this study. Beginning with the first set of three randomly selected interviews, helping CIs, hindering CIs, and WL items were extracted and coded. Categories aligning with the study's frame of reference were then created and labeled using CIs and WL items sharing related themes from the first interview. Similarly, CIs and WL items from the second and third transcripts of the set were then either placed into existing categories or created new categories. This procedure was repeated with the second and third sets of transcripts. The creation of new categories was tracked to evaluate data exhaustiveness, and as no new categories emerged for the fifth through ninth interviews, it was determined that exhaustiveness was reached after the fourth interview. An overview of categories created is listed in Table 2. The participation rate

Table 2

Overview of Categories for Helping and Hindering Critical Incidents and Wish List Items

Incident type	Categories	Number of Critical Incidents
Helping	Community building	14
	Fostering personal connection in the classroom	13
	Building students' self-confidence and resilience	10
	Adapting in-class experience to students	7
	Advocacy and empowerment	6
	Meaningful learning	8
	Systemic supports	6
Hindering	Structural barriers	11
	Students' life outside school	10
	Differing experiences and expectations	7
	Students' emotional state	7
	Characteristics of school staff	8
Wish List	Systemic supports	11
	Increased specialized support	6
	Increased training	4
	Community building	6

(PR) for each category was calculated by determining the proportion of participants having contributed at least one CI or WL to one category. At the closing of the interview and analysis phase, CIs and WL categories that received a participant rate (PR) of endorsement of 25% or higher were retained (Butterfield et al., 2009). One category of helping CIs, *systemic supports*, which will be discussed later, received a PR of 22% and consequently would not be reported in the results. However, this category was retained due the significant number of CIs within it, and due to the fact that systemic issues were also highlighted in both hindering CIs and WL categories.

Rigour

To ensure the trustworthiness of the results of this study, all nine of the credibility checks put forth by Butterfield et al. (2009) were followed. These included 1) digital recording; 2) interviewer fidelity; 3) independent extraction of CIs and WL items; 4) exhaustiveness; 5) participation rates; 6) independent categorization of CIs and WL items; 7) expert opinions from professors conducting health- and education-focused inter-disciplinary research on immigration; 8) cross-checking by participants through email and in some instances, additionally via telephone; and 9) theoretical agreement. Further, the reflexivity of all research team members was monitored through journaling as well as peer and supervisory debriefing to expose, challenge, and address any implicit biases and attitudinal assumptions that may have been made throughout the research process (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013).

Results

As outlined in Appendix B, results from the nine in-depth qualitative interviews yielded 107 CIs (64 helping and 43 hindering) and 27 WL items. These are outlined below along with excerpts from participants' interviews.

Factors that Enhance School Success and Engagement

As outlined above, participants identified 64 helping CIs in their work with ARNS who experienced school success and engagement in high school. These helpful factors centered on a) community building, b) fostering personal connection in the classroom, c) building students' self-confidence and resilience, d) adapting in-class experience to students, e) advocacy and empowerment, f) meaningful learning, and g) systemic supports. For each category, the strategies that teachers discussed are described along with their positive consequences on ARNS' school success and engagement.

Community Building

This category included 6 CIs (33% PR, $n = 3$) and involved strategies geared at connecting ARNS and their families with school, community, and services. Participants discussed how many of these students experienced isolation, which they experienced as either a lack of belonging, or a reticence to share openly about themselves. Therefore, educators focused heavily on tackling detachment by pairing ARNS with Canadian-born students, promoting enrollment in clubs and sports, and showcasing students to the school community and to the community at large. Such practices allowed these students to contribute more meaningfully to the classroom and bolster their sense of belonging. The following participant quote illustrated the impact of athletic involvement on ARNS' sense of integration and connection:

One student ... was so disengaged when he came to me ... He had been in Canada for a year and a half at that point. Fail. Fail. Fail. Fail Home life was difficult ... I was like, "Have you ever thought about playing rugby?" ... I took him down, and introduced him to the rugby coach ... He ended up playing backs on the junior rugby team Through rugby, he made friends. He became connected. He bought into the school culture, everything, and his grades started going up.

Fostering Personal Connection in the Classroom

This category included 13 CIs (67% PR, $n = 6$) and reflected the personal aspect of teachers' relationships with students, which promoted accessibility, warmth, and sense of safety in the classroom. Participants reported how many ARNS experienced uncertainty and exclusion upon arrival into their first Canadian school, in addition to often being unaware of support services available to them or how to go about asking for help. To address this need, teachers reported that they employed a more human and relatable communication style with ARNS, and strove to make their classrooms safe environments for all. These strategies helped foster a sense of safety, as well as trust and openness between teachers and ARNS. One participant captured the effect of the "personalization" of the teacher-student relationship role in the following account:

I think it's about making it about them and not about me It's about meeting them where they're at.

What is it that's weighing so heavily on them right now? Is it that they have no friends? They're lonely ... there's a point when they start coming to you and you're not going to them. So, when they start coming to me in the hallway, or before or after class and telling me a joke or telling me what's going on in their life, that's when I know it worked. That's when I know we've kind of turned the corner in that relationship. And that's gonna be the foundation of everything else.

Building Students' Self-Confidence and Resilience

This category included 10 CIs (56% PR, n = 5) and was defined by participants as strategies aimed at bolstering students' sense of mastery and competence. According to participants, many ARNS experienced poor self-image, and low social and academic confidence, all of which hampered their ability to engage socially and achieve academic success. Participants emphasized the importance of using strategies specifically aimed at these struggles, allowing students to gain confidence and trust in themselves both inside and outside the classroom. Strategies shared by participants reflected a culture of validating and endorsing ARNS' strengths and abilities, which typically increased pride and sense of ownership, as well as academic performance and engagement. One participant discussed the success of ancillary classes for these students and the establishment of a positive culture of learning:

Students come to my class almost every day. And (some students) are not in my class. And I'm like, "you have a free period now and you don't want to sit at home or sit in the Student Center?" And they say, "No, I want to be here 'cause this place is great. This is so much fun. And it's so productive you can get all your stuff done". They're very supportive of each other and it makes you feel good when you help somebody. And it makes you feel good when somebody helped you.

Adapting In-Class Experience to Students

This category included 7 CIs (56% PR, n = 5) and involved strategies aimed at tailoring learning material and structure to suit students' needs. Participants shared how many of the ARNS were placed in mainstream classrooms with same-age Canadian students despite experiencing significant social, academic, and linguistic challenges compared to their Canadian and other newcomer peers. As a result, participants stated that they adapted their in-class material and practices to more appropriately support these students' specific needs by offering adjunct classes, instituting team teaching, and recruiting educational assistants or language specialists to allow for improved student assessment and delivery of appropriate material. One participant shared the impact that an educational assistant can bring to the classroom:

Due to the complex class composition and [large] class sizes, having an Educational Assistant to be able to free you to work one-on-one with somebody, or to have them work on a particular skill can help newcomer students experience less frustration and more success. Again, there's an opportunity to connect with another adult in the building and some of these Educational Assistant-student relationships have been the most powerful I've witnessed.

Advocacy and Empowerment

This category included 6 CIs (56% PR, n = 5) and emphasized the importance of increasing awareness and practice of social justice approaches aiding newcomer students who have been

marginalized. Participants reflected that ARNS occasionally lacked advocacy from family or caregivers, which limited their access to the attention and support they believed these students required following migration. Participants reported that they believed caregivers were often unaware of (or at times declined) specific services available to students, or that they were unable to express their children's needs effectively. Participants believed that these challenges hampered ARNS' transition into the school system and broader community. As a result, they endeavoured to advocate for their students both inside and outside the classroom, and often engaged in connecting these students and their caregivers with supports. Participants discussed how advocating for ARNS' desired needs despite parental disagreement, allowed them, at times, to overcome behavioural challenges they were exhibiting at school:

She wanted to be a dancer. The family wanted her to be something else. Her behavior was changing, and things were not going well. So, inviting the parents, and convincing them that they should back off, and allow their daughter to go to the high school she wanted to go to so that she could dance. She became a dancer, won all the dance awards in high school Being the person who will advocate even when the student is having issues around the home.

Meaningful Learning

This category included 8 CIs (33% PR, $n = 3$) and outlined educational opportunities that ARNS valued and considered to be significant and purposeful, increasing the likelihood of engagement and learning. Participants reported that many ARNS demonstrated low engagement with both the standard methods of learning and format of Canadian schooling. Disengagement occurred in part due to the discrepancy between the students' English proficiency levels and that of the curriculum, and that they experienced difficulty perceiving the purpose or utility of the material being taught. To stimulate connection with the material, participants implemented less-conventional learning methods such as field trips, role playing, or journal writing, which helped boost social integration, academic motivation, and student buy-in. The following participant quote provides an example of meaningful learning:

At the end of this program, we would always do some sort of open-house book launch. A lot of work was put into it and the [students], they had to be in front of a booth, they all had jobs to do, or they were greeters, they had to take guests around and show them the displays and tell what we've done. This developed pride in what they did.

Systemic Supports

This category included 6 CIs (22% PR, $n = 2$) and represented the development and coordination of a network of helpful professionals, whereby a supportive administration enabled flexible and tailored teaching practices and time tabling. Participants reported that tailoring the curriculum to students' specific needs helped level the playing field for both ARNS and newcomer students (in relation to that of non-newcomers), bolstering them socially and academically in the face of inescapable social comparison. Participants achieved this by helping students understand local culture and customs, connecting them with health care supports when necessary, and providing them with adapted academic pacing and classroom placement. One of the participants reflected this process in the following quote:

Keeping newcomers out of mainstream classes enabled students to value their own experience and what they were doing before getting dumped into the bigger pot. For myself, just the whole way of the mainstream ... the whole judgment thing that teenagers can be so big on. We wanted them to have a solid footing before they ran into that in a school setting ... so that they could continue to value and move forward with their own learning even if they were met with some criticism or some judgment.

Factors that Impede School Success and Engagement

Participants in this study discussed 43 CIs that hindered their work with ARNS. These hindering factors centered on a) structural barriers, b) students' life outside school, c) differing experiences and expectations, d) students' emotional state, and e) characteristics of school staff. For each category, the challenges that the participants discussed are described along with their negative consequences on ARNS' development.

Structural Barriers

This category included 11 CIs (44% PR, n = 4) and outlined limitations of the educational, administrative, and structural systems in place that affected students' experiences in school. Participants described how restrictions affecting scheduling, assessment, and accessibility to academic and health specialists generally led to a reduction in tailored attention and care, which was described as essential to the functioning of ARNS in school. Frustrated and powerless to counter such regulations, participants described witnessing students fall short of unrealistic expectations, and disengage and drop out of school, as reflected in the following participant quote:

So unfortunately, during a certain period of time due to an economic downturn ... all ESL teachers were eliminated. So, when I say administrative support, I'm going even higher than principals, I'm talking about the board. When they decided that was something they could eliminate ... the numbers of English language learners who did not succeed or complete high school skyrocketed.

Students' Life Outside School

This category included 10 CIs (44% PR, n = 4) and represented the impact of home life experiences that created barriers to students' abilities to succeed in school. Participants listed a variety of challenges that they believed impacted ARNS' success in school, among which was a history of family trauma and home life disruption. When newcomer families were experiencing their own challenges based on historical and social difficulties, participants felt students' self-care practices (e.g., nutrition and hygiene) were impacted. They reported how these factors hindered students' mental and physical health, as well as their ability to connect with their peers. Typically, in-class attention, behaviour, and attendance all suffered in turn, ultimately leading to academic failure and disengagement. Some participants shared that the difficulty they faced connecting students with supportive services was in part due to the boundaries of their professional roles and by the feeling that student's families were occasionally not open to receiving the support they provided. The following participant quote reflected the compounding effects of a difficult home situation on ARNS' success in school:

We even almost lost one student to the street because there was something that he was very upset about that had happened at home, but it played into how he was behaving at school, and he started to

withdraw from the engagement. This student disappeared and it took us three days to find him, and he was just on the street because he was with an aunt whom he had found out wasn't an aunt after all and ... was he really wanted? Coming over with people who sometimes had so many other issues, they couldn't be real prime caregivers, that created issues.

Differing Experiences and Expectations

This category included 7 CIs (56% PR, n = 5) and centered on the challenges brought forth by the discrepancy between a students' previous life learnings and the rules, expectations, and norms of a different culture's school environment. Several participants witnessed ARNS struggle to understand and meet the socio-cultural and academic expectations of a Canadian school environment, which are typically disseminated in a manner that does not account for the linguistic and social challenges experienced by many newcomers. Participants discussed how they typically lacked the time and appropriate supports to help attend to these discrepancies, typically leaving ARNS feeling frustrated and with little hope to narrow the gap. Stunted integration, academic stagnation, and disciplinary problems frequently ensued. One participant shared the following experience of how unintentional cultural misinterpretation and mistakes further hindered ARNS' ability to connect with others in school:

I just think about how so many of them were taking stabs at what would be cool to say or think or do, and they were very unsure of whether it was, or it wasn't socially acceptable, culturally the right thing to do. There's an insecurity that comes with being so new to this culture. And even those with good language skills, I mean if they don't have good language skills it's just compounded five-fold.

Students' Emotional State

This category included 7 CIs (44% PR, n = 4) and reflected the impact that a student's state of mind can have on their ability to attend to material and learn. Participants shared how they believed undiagnosed mental health issues or learning disabilities, as well as conflict fuelled by prejudice between different cultural groups affected students' attention and attendance, often leading to academic and social disengagement. Educators discussed how addressing these concerns often remained beyond their professional capacity and that students and their families occasionally declined referrals to services. Participants reported that they believed that these ARNS' struggles often remained unaddressed and untreated as illustrated by the following participant quote:

If you are struggling with depression, aren't able to get help, you're tired all the time, you're sleeping in, you're not making it to school, or you are intermittently ... or let's say you have anxiety and you miss one day, and then you miss two days, and then you become completely overwhelmed about everything that you've missed, and all you know, your teacher's going to say is as soon as you walk in, "well, you've got five assignments that are due," and you get completely overwhelmed, have a breakdown, panic attack or whatever, and go back and you hide in your bedroom, and we don't see those students again.

Characteristics of School Staff

This category included 8 CIs (44% PR, n = 4) and reflected the cultural, personal, and/or professional shortcomings of educators and administrators. Participants lamented that poor

teacher training, inadequate cultural responsiveness of staff, and resistance to adjusting curricula led to the conflation of ARNS' needs with those of non-newcomers, which disadvantages the ARNS population. In addition, participants claimed that such shortcomings in staff often undermined the very values of respect and trust that participants worked hard to instill in ARNS. Disengagement or drop out frequently ensued. One participant described the effect of such discrimination:

Well, I mean, many students would come and talk to me about things that teachers had said to them. It made them feel bad. I would hear things said by teachers that I would end up having to address ... It hindered [the students] as any ignorance does. It didn't allow them to fulfill their full potential. Didn't make them feel welcome. Didn't make them feel like they belonged.

Factors That Require Attention for School Success and Engagement

Participants identified 27 WL items that would have been helpful to them in their work with ARNS to ensure their school success and engagement in high school. These factors included a) systemic supports, b) increased specialized support, c) increased training, and d) community building. For each category, the WL items that teachers discussed are described along with the manner in which they would have improved ARNS' development.

Systemic Supports

This category included 11 WL items (78% PR, n = 7) and reflected the need for curriculum and policy adjustments to specifically address the needs of ARNS. Participants expressed disappointment with their schools' lack of a differentiated learning environment for these students due to systemic practices such as classroom overcrowding, poor student assessment and placement, and the eradication of language-learning opportunities. As a result, participants felt left to their own devices to personalize education by adapting the assessment process and by implementing a flexible and tailored path of language learning for these students. Participants hoped that if school systems put in place more individualized assessment and responded appropriately to the outcomes, they would facilitate a smoother school integration process and provide ARNS with the specialized attention they require to succeed socially and academically. To illustrate, one participant stated:

I saw a kid who came just months before landing in my class and seemed to integrate beautifully, [but] some kids have been here for five, seven years ... they're not ESL anymore, but just have a hard time integrating. So ... on a system level, I would say it's critical that when they're placed in a classroom, there should be a capacity assessment. Are they in a position academically to have a chance to comprehend and succeed in this material? And then after that comes the accommodation on other grounds, other issues.

Increased Specialized Support

This category included 6 WL items (56% PR, n = 5) and was defined as initiatives that provided a greater variety of specialized services for ARNS. Participants reflected how ARNS' complex needs remained unmet due to understaffing and overextension of teachers. Therefore, participants proposed hiring additional support professionals trained in mental and physical health, language

learning, and academics to help narrow the multiple gaps separating ARNS from their Canadian and other newcomer peers. WL items also reflected the value of personalized support, as several participants mentioned that the effectiveness of these coveted professionals would hinge on first recognizing students' individual and pressing needs and then acting on them. Overall, participants expressed that increasing specialized support would directly benefit ARNS engagement, attendance, and general health. One participant shared the following quote regarding increased academic support:

Students don't understand that there's a difference between an adjective and a verb, and they can't write an opening paragraph, and they don't understand what a structure of an essay is, and a teacher doesn't have time to get back to that. They just expect them to write. I wish that one-on-one support was available in the school setting and a teacher is not expected to just teach everything to everybody all the time, differentiate for everybody. It's too much. You're pressured to cover certain things and perform a certain way and the teacher cannot do everything all the time.

Increased Training

This category included 4 WL items (44% PR, $n = 4$) and represented strategies and approaches that increased opportunities for professional development for educators and support staff. Participants discussed how teachers' and administrators' lack of awareness of the distinct needs and realities of ARNS contributed to students being denied the appropriate attention and support. Accordingly, WL items falling into this category revealed a desire to support teachers and administration in developing a greater sensitivity to the specific challenges faced by ARNS to Canada. Participants proposed that improvements in teacher training programs and professional development opportunities would help teachers and administrators recognize their own biases, appreciate the cultural, traumatic, and transitional realities experienced by ARNS, and acknowledge the fundamental importance of English language learning in the overall success of their entire migration process. By way of example, one participant shared the following experience:

Well, for one thing our teachers do not know anything about English language development ... I mean no one teaches a secondary teacher how to teach a child to read, and what phonemic awareness is because your kids are all reading by the time you show up at junior high school, so that's not an issue. Yet we know it's a huge issue among newcomer youth and refugees that they actually don't know how to read. They don't know how to decode Those pieces then, if you get teachers who haven't got a clue how to access that information and make it comprehensible for kids, they're just treading the water.

Community Building

This category included 6 CIs (33% PR, $n = 3$) and involved strategies geared at connecting ARNS and their families with school, community, and services. Participants expressed that several of their students experienced marginalization and shame at school, which, if left unchecked, often developed into a self-perpetuating negative spiral. WL items reflecting community building sought to attend to needs of acceptance and belonging, and to create a wraparound support network promoting accessibility to necessary services. Participants discussed the socio-integrative benefit of creating meaningful inclusion opportunities for ARNS with educators, successful former ARNS, and non-newcomer students through club membership or joint projects.

Participants also discussed the importance of providing support services for families of ARNS, proposed as a means to help scaffold the students by growing the web of care surrounding them. The following quote by one participant highlights recommendations to increase teacher-student connections:

The biggest thing is removing the “administrivia”, as we call it, the paperwork aspect. The amount of wasted time on documents and all this stuff, like you have to understand that it’s got to be time dedicated to just hanging out with kids.

Discussion

This study employed the ECIT (Butterfield et al., 2009) to address the following research question: *What are the factors that influence the school success and engagement of newcomer students with a history of behavioural, emotional, and/or learning challenges?* Nine in-depth qualitative interviews with high school teachers revealed a number of factors that helped, hindered, and would have been desirable in their work with ARNS who experienced school success and engagement. Specifically, based on their successful work with ARNS, they identified a number of CI and WL items. These factors reflect some of the critical needs of ARNS in schools, including connections with other students, teachers, and community members; adjustments with respect to class activities and curricula; opportunities for meaningful learning in smaller class settings; greater social-emotional supports; increased cultural responsiveness and specialized training from school staff and systems; as well as necessities to bridge gaps between educational, familial, and communal settings.

These participants’ experiences shed light on some of the educational interventions that might be helpful at multiple levels, such as the individual, curricula, and broader system. It is important to note that some of these needs are not unique to ARNS, but common across many newcomer students. What distinguishes ARNS from other groups, however, is the critical nature of the everyday realities they face (e.g., mental health challenges, absenteeism from school, failing grades, etc.). Hence, there is an imminent need for intervention at all three levels. Essentially, the longer ARNS go without intervention, the harder it may be to support them through school engagement and success.

Individual Interventions

The teachers who participated in this study reported a number of practices that they used in their classrooms in order to build relationships with ARNS and help them develop self-confidence and resilience. Although these concepts are not new to high school teaching (Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020; Morrison & Allen, 2007), the manner in which they are brought to life in the classroom may vary when it comes to connecting with and supporting ARNS. For example, participants highlighted the importance of making classrooms and schools safe and welcoming by fostering of warm, caring, and nonjudgmental connections with ARNS. Several teachers stated that such approaches acted as a buffer to the uncertainty and distress typically experienced by ARNS following migration. Initiating the creation of a safe and welcoming school environment may be critical to newcomer youths’ school success given that these students tend to underutilize external sources of support when distressed (Heidi et al., 2011; Majumder et al., 2015). In fact, devoting time to making connections and inquiring about newcomer’s progress may provide the care

necessary to foster a sense of belonging for ARNS, and act as a safeguard against the development of negative self-internalizations and disempowered cultural identities (Naraghi et al., 2020; Ngo et al., 2017).

In addition, research has shown that when newcomer high school students had teachers who they felt were knowledgeable about the newcomer experience (e.g., the challenges that accompany the transition to a new country) as well as their specific cultural backgrounds (e.g., the collectivistic nature of learning and sharing), their transition to post-secondary education was deemed to be smoother (Gallucci & Kassan, 2019; Kassan et al., 2019). Participants in this study echoed the importance of such knowledge, sharing their observations of the detrimental effects that ensued when educators and administrators lacked understanding and compassion for ARNS with a history of behavioural, emotional, and/or learning challenges.

Given the importance of teacher training in newcomer youth's adjustment, Binhas and Yaknich (2019) suggested that teachers should be supported to engage in "a process of professionalization that includes comprehensive theoretical and practical preparation, ongoing mentoring, and establishing collaborative teams and communities" (p. 266). However, as echoed by some of the participants in this study, professional development opportunities in the area of diversity, and more specifically ARNS' educational needs, are scarce—a reality that has been documented in the literature (Binhas & Yaknich, 2019; Kumi-Yeboah et al., 2020; Nathoo, 2017; Suárez-Orozco & Michikyan, 2016). At the same time, even when such training is available, it can be difficult to infuse it in teachers' already busy schedules (Mendenhall et al., 2017; Ngo, 2012).

Curricula Adjustments

Participants in this study also shared the manner in which they adapted in-class material to be responsive to the needs of ARNS and to make learning meaningful for them. Such individualized learning has been said to be critical to ARNS, as it allows them to connect with the class material and make sense of it in a way that fits with their values and worldviews (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2015; Nathoo, 2017; Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, & de Lardemelle, 2010). Having the flexibility to adjust curricula in this way seems crucial to ARNS, given their propensity to disengage from school due to inappropriate grade placements and from being over- or under-challenged in class (Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, et al., 2010; Wilkinson, 2004). Unfortunately, such adaptations are dependent on teachers' knowledge and ability, and become increasingly limited as ARNS progress through high school and the curriculum becomes more standardized (Gallucci & Kassan, 2019; Suárez-Orozco & Marks, 2016). Thus, it seems necessary to address such changes to the classroom experiences at a broader curriculum level.

The individuals who took part in this research reported on some of the unique challenges they encountered working within the existing curriculum with ARNS who had experienced significant challenges in their trajectory to date. As found in previous research, these difficulties include, but are not limited to, being an English language learner (Suárez-Orozco & Marks, 2016), discrimination (Özdemir et al., 2019), identity negotiation (Ngo et al., 2017), and mental health issues (Motti-Stefanidi, & Masten, 2013). Accordingly, participants discussed the manner in which they advocated for and empowered these students in various ways. As mentioned above, most teachers took the liberty of adjusting the curriculum either on their own or among a small group of specialized teachers. Although the adjustments met the needs and experiences of ARNS, they remained largely untested and unstandardized. Previous studies have shed light on the ways in which newcomer youth can benefit from adjustments made to the education curriculum (Ngo,

2012; Sleeter, 2008). However, a more systemic approach is required to ensure that these adjustments are actually helpful to these students. Further, it is important to provide this type of opportunity to ARNS across educational settings and not just to a select few who have teachers who are more knowledgeable in this area.

Systemic Requirements

The teachers in this study identified a number of structural barriers to their work with ARNS along with the necessity of adopting a social justice stance in their work. According to participants, such an approach is even more critical for educators and administrators who do not possess expertise in working with ARNS (Nathoo, 2017). Although the individual classroom and curriculum interventions proposed above can be helpful to these students (Gallucci & Kassan, 2019), they require attention and engagement at a broader systemic level in order to impact a larger number of students.

Further, participants advocated for the implementation of greater, more visible, and more accessible resources and services. That is, numerous participants discussed how challenging it was to work with ARNS in the classroom considering the context of their complex lives as they transitioned to Canadian society. The monocultural nature of school systems—one that operates predominantly from a Western understanding and worldview of education and adolescent social-emotional development—has been identified by scholars in the United States and Canada alike (Guo & Guo, 2015; Suárez-Orozco & Michikyan, 2016). In this research, the need for additional educational support in the classroom as well as emotional support within the school was deemed to be paramount. Although the stigma surrounding help seeking is well-documented in the literature for both newcomer (Yeh & Kwan, 2009) and non-newcomer (Gulliver et al., 2010) students, it is important for schools to work on creative solutions to help youth receive the necessary support. To be effective, it is critical for such supports to be engaging to the youth (Kassan et al., 2019; Ngo, 2012) and culturally sensitive in nature (Kassan & Sinacore, 2016; Nathoo, 2017).

Finally, participants identified systemic supports and community building as critical to their work with ARNS with a history of behavioural, emotional, and/or learning challenges. As a primary point of contact in the host country (Brown, 2014; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2009), schools are ideally positioned to help ARNS develop support systems inside and outside the educational setting. In this way, schools can act as cultural brokers to all newcomer youth (Gatlin & Johnson, 2017), helping them (and their families) create ties within the school and the broader community. Building partnerships with community-based organizations may be one way to create a community of care for ARNS that also offers a network of support for teachers. Scholars have identified that teachers with access to reliable external support structures felt better equipped to coordinate, collaborate, and consult with colleagues on strategies of care and support for vulnerable newcomer youth (Häggström et al., 2020). Further, as suggested by Guo and Guo (2015), educational policies must be redesigned with newcomer students in mind, as current practices can be detrimental to their school engagement and academic success. Specifically, these policies need to be informed by the lived experiences of newcomer students and their parents, as well as the teachers working with them, like those who participated in this study.

Limitations

This study was not without limitations. At the time of interviewing, the majority of participants were either retired or no longer working as teachers with ARNS. Although the contributions of this study's participants represent essential data, the authors acknowledge the value of including perspectives of active teachers currently working with ARNS in order to reveal a more comprehensive portrait of the factors that may help, hinder, and be desirable for this group. Similarly, the authors recognize the importance and relevance of the voices of ARNS who were not included in this study, and therefore the teachers' contributions alone represent only one part of this narrative. Thus, considering the perspectives of other important stakeholders will contribute to a deeper understanding of the experience of ARNS in the current cultural context. Further, given the qualitative nature of the study, it was left up to participants to identify as "experts" who have successfully worked with ARNS. Although a clear explanation and definition was provided to participants through the screening process, it is possible that their perceptions of newcomer students who were at-risk and those who were not were blurred at times. It is important to acknowledge that the authors' definition of ARNS may not have been at the forefront for participants throughout the entire interview process. Further research delineating the distinctive characteristics and experience of ARNS within a school environment may provide a deeper understanding of school success and engagement among this group.

Conclusion

This study centered on the experiences of high school teachers who worked with newcomer youth with a history of behavioural, emotional, and/or learning challenges who experienced school success and engagement. These participants shared their expertise in working with such a vulnerable population and identified key CIs and WL items that were and/or would be instrumental to the success of ARNS. These factors prompt the need to focus on interventions at the classroom, curriculum, and systemic levels—all of which are required in conjunction with one another to help ARNS successfully navigate the complexities of a new school setting following migration.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol: Group 1—Teachers & Support Staff—CBE

Participant #: _____ Date: _____

Interview Start Time: _____

Preamble:

As you know, I am investigating what practices have been helpful and hindering in increasing the academic success and school engagement of at-risk immigrant youth experiencing challenges in school (e.g. suspensions, disengagement, behavioural outbursts, or equivalent concerns).

This interview will likely take 1-1.5 hours, and its purpose is to collect information about your experience working to support at-risk immigrant youth academically and what made strategies you used that made it easier and which ones made it more difficult.

1. Ice Breaker Questions:

Before I get into the interview, I would like to get to know you a little better. Perhaps you can tell me:

For Support workers:

- a. Tell me a little bit about yourself?
- b. How did you come to start working with at-risk immigrant youth?
- c. What do you enjoy about your work?
- d. Please do not tell me any of the student's names, but are there at-risk immigrant youth that you can think of who you have worked with due to emotional, behavioural, or academic challenges that are now doing better since you began working with them?

[Great, so as a reminder, this interview will center on your overall experience providing help for school related challenges to at-risk immigrant youth, with specific attention to the types of activities, teaching, and support that you have found helpful or not so helpful in working with this population. Please note that we will not be asking about your experience working with any one student. As such, we ask that you do not talk about a specific student or talk about any information that may lead to the identification of any students you have worked with.].

2. Contextual Component

For Support Workers: As a warm up to our discussion on the practices that have influenced the academic success (e.g. good grades, not failing classes, no longer getting suspended etc.) and school engagement (e.g. participating in classes, and in school activities), of the newcomer youths you have been working with, I am going to ask you about your general impressions of the challenges that they were having in school prior to starting working with you. As a

reminder, when I say challenges, I mean suspension from school, missing or failing classes, disengaged from school and/or classroom activities, and/or sent for support services for other behavioural concerns.

- a. How were the needs of the at-risk immigrant students you worked with different from those students (immigrants and others) who did not display the same compounded challenges?

Probe questions:

- In relation to academic success, what were the needs/challenges you saw?
- In relation to school engagement, what were the needs/challenges you saw?

- b. From your perspective, having seen these needs, and after working with these at-risk immigrant students, what types of changes did you see in the academic success and school engagement?

Probe—How big were these changes?

Critical Incident Component

For Support Workers:

- a. When working at-risk immigrant students (with compounded needs), what things have you done that you think have helped them do better in school? (Probes: What was the specific incident/practice? How did it impact the students? Can you give me a specific example (without giving any identifying information) of how it helped? How did the specific practice help students engage more in school and do better academically?)

Helpful Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ...?)	Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about ... that you find so helpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

- b. When working at-risk immigrant students (with compounded needs), were/are there any things that you noticed that made it more difficult for you to help them to do better in school? (Alternate question: What kinds of things have happened that made it harder for them to do better at school?)

Hindering Factor & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ...?)	Importance (How did it hinder? Tell me what it was about ... that you find so unhelpful.)	Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)

- c. Summarize what has been discussed up to this point with the participant as a transition to the next question:

We've talked about what practices you think have helped this student to do well (name them), and some things that have made it more difficult to help them to do well (name them). Are there other things that you wish/ed were a part of the process of supporting these students in school but are/were not available to you?

Wish List Item & What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ...?)	Importance (How would it help? Tell me what it is about ... that you would find so helpful.)	Example (In what circumstances might this be helpful?)

Summary of interview information.

To summarize what we have discussed so far, you have identified several factors that have helped the students you have worked with do better in school including ____, ____, and _____. Is there anything else that you believed you did that helped them do better in school? You have also identified factors that made the process of helping these students do better in school difficult including ____, ____, and _____. At this point, is there anything else that made helping them do better in school more difficult for you? Lastly, you mentioned some factors that you feel would have been helpful in supporting these students in school but were not available to you at the time, and these included ____, ____, and _____. Is there anything else that you believe would have been helpful?

- a. Is there anything else that you think I should know about your experience working with and supporting at-risk immigrant youth?
- b. What prompted you to volunteer to do this interview?
- c. What was this interview like for you?

Interview End Time: _____

Length of interview: _____

Interviewer's Name: _____

Appendix B: List of Helping and Hindering Critical Incidents and Wish List Items

Helping Critical Incidents	
Category	Critical Incidents
Community Building	Relationship-building exercises for students Connecting newcomers to local services Promoting multicultural acceptance Connecting newcomers with key students Promoting participation in clubs and sports Turning school into a community Helping student build strong connection with a member of staff Filling a need for belonging, security Pairing up with another student Peer ambassador programs Showcasing students in positive light to teachers, community Encouraging newcomers to share own experience Connecting with home and family Developing understanding of student's culture
Fostering Personal Connection in the Classroom	Warm welcome for students and families Teacher self-disclosure Using student's language Address difficult topics but not focus on them Personalizing communication with student Providing supportive environment Teacher perseverance, becoming a go-to teacher Build a relationship with students Asking questions to students Using humour Having fun with students Make classroom a welcoming place Providing understanding support
Building Student's Self-Confidence and Resilience	Encouraging students to take ownership Validating students' experience Being specific with praise Working with students' strengths Using a strength-based approach Reinforcing positive behaviours Developing strong culture of learning Following a 'goal-skill-daily practice' strategy Helping form discipline, perseverance Addressing stigma of being English language learner
Adapting In-Class Experience to Students	Recognizing zones of proximal development Meeting students where they're at Having educational assistants Language learning-based expert teaching students or supporting teachers

Helping Critical Incidents (continued)

Advocacy and Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having an adjunct class Team teaching Having an educational assistant Advocating for the student Empowerment of girls and women Advocating for newcomer students Language responsiveness Advocating for the student
Meaningful Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental advocacy for students Curriculum-based field trips Acting things out in class Field trips Implement journal writing Making material relevant Role-playing Getting students out of school
Systemic Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting seeing the bigger picture Supportive administrators Appropriate programming Acknowledgement of curricular achievements District intake or reception centre Network of hands-on support Keeping newcomers out of mainstream

Hindering Critical Incidents

Category	Critical Incidents
Structural Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of ELL support from board of education Lack of structural opportunity to engage in time-tabling Lack of district leadership, support Lack of time to appropriately support students Complex class composition and class size Educational system Lack of recency in assessments Student demoralization due to grading Lack of funding School not equipped to address mental health concerns Insufficient support for pregnant newcomers
Student's Life Outside School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family, personal and cultural history Language barrier with parents Lack of structure in life outside school Student working outside school Lack of parental support, advocacy Poor student hygiene Students not used to Canadian school structure

Hindering Critical Incidents (continued)

Differing Experiences & Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family background Food issues Student's lack of understanding of Canadian school functioning Academic history Lack of academic skills hindering school integration Language barrier Student's lack of Canadian cultural competence Experiential barrier
Students' Emotional State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student illiteracy in their own first language Student unwillingness to do the work Undiagnosed health concerns Student prejudice between two cultural groups Student learned helplessness Student mental health concerns Cultural stigma attached to mental health support Student shutting down
Characteristics of School Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor teacher training with assessments Teacher prejudice, racism Teacher rigidity Teachers not understanding newcomer needs Lack of colleagues' cultural responsiveness Lack of colleagues' knowledge about ESL pedagogy Educators' reactive behaviour Lack of understanding by school administration

Wish List Items

Category	Wish List Items
Systemic Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller class sizes Less crowded schools Allowing completion of high school in more time School-wide advocacy for student Articulated path of language learning Personalization of response Greater diversity in ethnicity in teachers More supports for older students Stop elimination of English-as-another-language courses in schools Increased affordability, availability, and training for standardized tests Student placement appropriate for success
Increased Specialized Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified ELL designates in every school Additional academic support 'At-school parent' for every school More psychological support Increased psychological support Greater opportunities to address gender issues

Wish List Items (continued)

Increased Training	Requiring teacher training programs to include newcomer sensitivity More professional development Teaching mainstream teachers about differentiated learning Admin, teachers and support staff must be knowledgeable about ELL and newcomers
Community Building	Greater integration with mainstream students More clubs and groups Connecting students with successful newcomers Reducing administrative responsibilities to increase opportunity to connect In-school support services for families Educating parents about Canadian schooling
