

## **Addressing the Needs of Refugee Students in School Environments: Pre and Post Arrival Considerations**

Anni K. Reinking  
*Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville*

### **Abstract**

The United Nations Refugee Agency states that the education of refugees are in crisis. The statistics represent a low number of refugee students being educated worldwide. Understanding the statistics, educators in the United States have developed inclusive practices that are outlined in this review of literature. Some of the practices include developing an asset-based mindset when working with refugee families, developing an overarching resource network, and ensuring families feel welcomed and accepted. This literature review, between the years of 2009 to 2019, also have implications for future work and research.

### **Introduction**

For generations, the education of individuals immigrating to the United States has been characterized by an assimilationist approach or an approach where society absorbs individuals with various ethnic heritages (Olneck, 2000). Conversely, immigrant and refugee families/individuals have also traditionally been perceived as threats to the cohesion of society. Regardless of societal views, when families enter the United States, the children in the family must enter the United States school system as students. However, there are many factors that influence the educational experiences of refugee students. This fact leads to discourse regarding the educational experiences, student invisibility, and the marginalization of refugee students in school buildings and classrooms. Specifically, questions and research focused on school policies and practices are important. Therefore, in this review of current scholarship a focus will be placed on the policies and practices schools have or have not implemented in regards to refugee students.

Prior to introducing the current scholarship, a brief introduction to the state of refugee students is needed. The United Nations Refugee Agency (2019) states that the education of refugees are in crisis. Supporting this claim, they provide statistics. For example, 91% of children around the world attend primary school, however only 50% percent of refugee children go to primary school. Eighty-four percent of adolescents around the world attend secondary school, but just 22% of refugee adolescents receive any secondary education. Around the world 34% of youth go to university, but only 1% of refugee youth go to university. Despite these statistics, “access to education is a right for all children, stipulated in the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and migrant (refugee) children are entitled to education as soon as they arrive” (Sime, 2018, p. 1). Therefore, educating refugee students in the United States is non-negotiable, however the methods of reaching and teaching the students have varied over the years through the implemented policies and practices in school buildings.

When considering the staggering statistics of educated and non-educated refugee students, and the increased number of migrant and refugee children entering the United States, it is important to understand what is occurring in schools based in policies and practices. For example:

1. How are teachers being trained to work with refugee families and students? (practice)
2. How are school personnel being trained to embrace refugee students, regardless of their background experiences? (practice)
3. How are refugee students experiencing the United States educational system? (practice and policy)
4. How are schools creating and implementing policies to address the needs of refugee students and families? (policy)

These four questions are just a few of the questions being asked by researchers when investigating best practices for educating the multitude of refugee students in the United States school system. These four questions were also part of the central focus when collecting current scholarship focused on school systems and refugee students.

However, even though these questions build the foundation for the overall general focus of this scholarship review, it is also important to remember that not all refugee children have the same experience. Therefore, placing all refugee students into one box as a way to address needs is undesirable. While refugee families and students encounter varying experiences prearrival, the United States educational system focuses primarily on postarrival experiences, such as keeping students with like-age peers and assuming formal education etiquette had been taught and learned previously. Overall, this assumption is problematic because many times,

refugee children [have] often experience[d] frequent disruptions and limited access to schooling, leaving many behind their age-appropriate grade level. Sporadic schooling pre-resettlement may shape the attitudes of parents and children, potentially causing reluctance to invest time in schools and important relationships. Refugee children are also frequently exposed to multiple languages of instruction over the course of their migration, resulting in language confusion and difficulty mastering academic content (Dryden-Peterson, 2015).

Therefore, the purpose of this overarching review of literature is to understand what is currently being researched and implemented at the postarrival stage, while also taking into consideration the refugee students' prearrival experiences and the educators' prearrival training and education. This purpose focuses both on policies and practices in the field of education.

### **Significance**

This review of current literature is important for many reasons. First, during President Obama's term thousands of refugees entered the United States. In his last year alone 110,000 refugees entered and were resettled in the United States (Yuhas, 2018). Second, under President Trump and the current administration, barriers are being created for refugee families to enter legally, resulting in more hardships when families arrive and possible illegal settlements. Third, many school districts around the country have not had refugee children as part of their school community due to location. However, learning from school districts and personnel that have been educating refugee families for many years will be educational for educators, school boards, and policymakers as refugee families disperse around the United States into small towns, cities, and metropolitan areas. Finally, refugees are part of the fabric of the United States, therefore ensuring we are teaching all students equitably is imperative.

Overall, refugee families have been, are currently, and will be immigrating to the United States for generations, thus weaving together a diverse fabric of society. Within the last decade

educational research and nationwide movements have expanded mindsets focused on funds of knowledge, viewing students from an empowerment and equity lens, and accepting all students regardless of their multicultural background.

### Definitions

Before discussing the theoretical framework and pertinent scholarship, three terms need to be defined. The terms migrant, refugee, and immigrant are often used interchangeably. In this study, the term refugee will be predominately used. While the experiences of migrant, immigrant, and refugee families are different, in scholarship it is many times assumed that similar strategies can be used with all three groups. However, there is a distinction. Immigrant children and families are individuals who make a conscious decision to leave their home country, often go through an extensive vetting process, and many times become lawful permanent residents (International Rescue Committee, 2018). Migrant children (and families) have chosen to travel to a new country, usually for economic reasons or for seasonal work. Refugee children (and families) have been forced from their home (International Rescue Committee, 2018). This distinction is important to remember when discussing and researching educational practices because these distinctions have the possibility of creating different prearrival and postarrival experiences.

### Theoretical Framework

A conceptual framework was adopted as part of this review of literature. The conceptual framework, *process of segmented educational assimilation*, was revised by Lee (2011). This framework was redesigned using the work of Portes and Zhou's (1993) segmented assimilation, "which accounts for diverse entry situations and receptions of immigrant and refugee populations at a group-level" (Lee, 2011, p. 9). Lee combined four ideas to better understand the refugee experience from prearrival to postarrival in the educational setting. The four ideas are background factors, which include human and cultural capital, family acculturation patterns, obstacles and social capital, and expected outcomes. The revised conceptual framework is displayed in Figure 1.

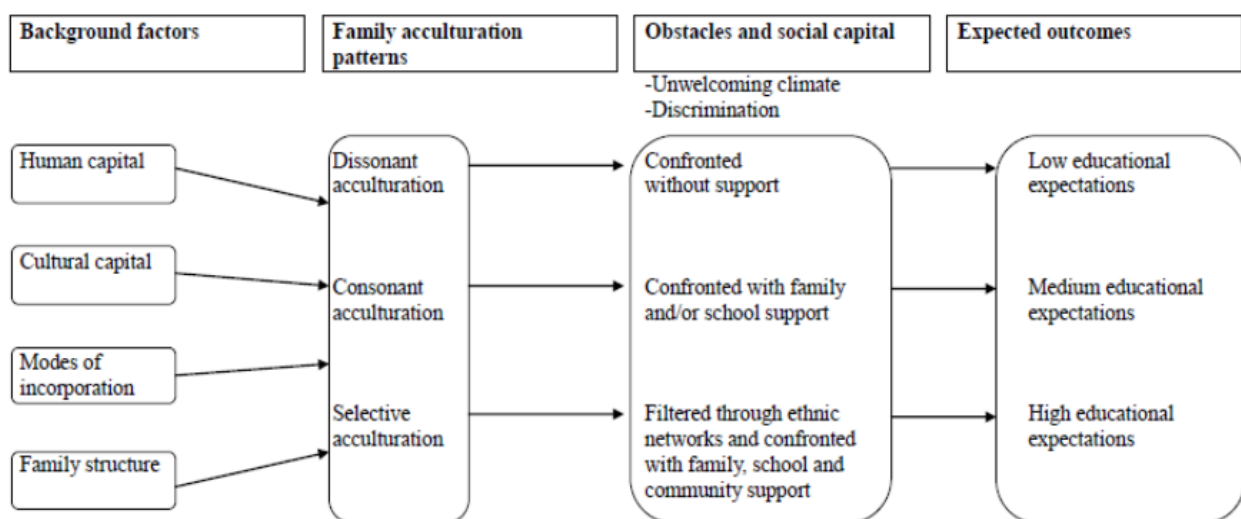


Figure 1. Revised Conceptual Framework: Segmented Educational Assimilation

This specific framework was originally designed to study second generation immigrants and focuses on immigrant students, both refugee and non-refugee, the framework still has valuable ideas that can be used in the study of refugee children and students entering classrooms in the current political and social climate. Additionally, in the revised conceptual framework (Figure 1), Lee (2011) was careful to embody major elements from scholarship in the area of refugee experiences, such as the “exploration of how immigrant students’ background factors may shape family acculturation patterns, which in turn may predict different paths to overcoming obstacles” (Lee, 2011, p. 10).

The ideas in the conceptual framework were used during the review of current literature and helped to focus the scholarship collection on specific strategies and common themes of educating refugee students in American schools, regardless of their age or grade level. Specifically, the background factors outlined impact how families acculturate, which impacts or coincides with their obstacles, which finally ends in a desired outcome. For example, a refugee family who is placed in a small town in the United States has their own capitals and forms of communication. Those influence how families acculturate or displays dominate cultural norms within their own lives. Depending on how acculturation is accepted by the community, this will impact the obstacles the refugee family can face in the community, therefore impacting the outcomes for the family. In the case of this literature review, it will impact the desired outcome of feeling welcomed in a school and achieving ones fullest academic and social potential.

Finally, the researcher purposefully gathered information from 2009–2019. The researcher gathered 75 articles to analyze and found similar or overlapping themes. Additionally, this time frame includes current research, while also taking into consideration President Obama and President Trump’s administrative work, along with other political aspects influencing refugee families.

### **Methodology**

The methodology used to collect the information for this review of current scholarship began with collegiate conversations focused on refugee and immigrant research in school settings. After research-based conversations, the researcher used key terms to find applicable articles within the timeframe of 2009–2019. The terms used in these searches included: refugee, immigrant, school, policy, and inclusion practices. As with any research, articles that were cited or linked to the initial articles were also included in this review, within the timeframe of 2009–2019.

Although this was not a true qualitative study, but a review of current literature, the researcher developed guiding research questions to centrally focus the scholarship search. The guiding research questions for this study included:

1. How are teachers being trained to work with refugee families and students? (practice)
2. How are school personnel being trained to embrace refugee students, regardless of their background experiences? (practice)
3. How are refugee students experiencing the United States educational system? (practice and policy)
4. How are schools creating and implementing policies to address the needs of refugee students and families? (policy)

The guiding research questions were used during the information search as a way to centrally focus the gathered scholarship.

After the information and articles were gathered, the researcher developed overarching topic headings to describe the current scholarship. The concepts found through the literature review include the importance of building a sense of community through strategies that address the overall needs of refugee students and families, incorporating parents/families in the education of students, student and family backgrounds, and obstacles and social capital refugee students and families may face. Through the process of studying the linked concepts, it became apparent that they all take the stance of equity for all.

Equity in education has been at the forefront of multicultural educational research for several years, and there is a strong distinction between equity and equality. The dictionary definition of equity is “justice according to natural law or right; freedom from bias or favoritism.” Essentially, equity means making sure every student has the support they need to be successful, while equality means treating every student the same. Equity in education requires putting systems in place to ensure that every child has an equal chance for success, such as resource networks for refugee students and families (Thinkingmaps.com, 2018) and understand prearrival and postarrival experiences.

## **Literature Review Findings**

### **Building Community**

Building a community of people to support human and cultural capital is important for all students, however is clearly apparent in the research for refugee students and families. Refugee students entering school buildings come from various backgrounds and experiences. These experiences often involve trauma, isolation, and stress, which can lead to feelings of low self-esteem, depression, or other harmful mental and physical consequences (Ferriss & Forrest-Bank, 2018). Therefore, before school personnel can develop a sense of community, build strong relationships with students and families, or create a welcoming and accepting curriculum, a plethora of resources need to be secured. As stated in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, a person needs to have their physiological needs met (food, water, warmth, and rest) and their safety needs met (security and safety) before relationships and learning can begin (McLeod, 2017). Embracing the equity lens, school personnel have the task of understanding the unique challenges and barriers faced by individual refugee students, as well as the population as a whole. For refugee students this means that districts need to first become educated on all the needs and then identify resources for the varied needs students will likely carry into the school environment (Nur & Hunter, 2009).

Resources span from providing individuals who speak the student’s home language to creating programs that address needs based on past and current experiences to providing healthcare. In one study the researchers described the work of a 4th grade teacher who noticed a refugee child needed dental care. Advocating for the student, the teacher collaborated with the school nurse and a local dentist. Through this process they were able to get the student the dental care he needed. While this is just one example, it illustrates the work districts, schools, administrators, and teachers need to engage in to ensure the physiological and safety needs of refugee students are met. However, in order to create a professional, equity-based team at the district or school level, hiring quality teachers that are knowledgeable about weaving diversity into classrooms, implementing curriculum that reflects and encourages home language use, and hiring professionals that are adequately prepared to meet the psychosocial needs of the students is imperative (Nur & Hunter, 2009).

Once resources for physical and psychological healthcare are established, deeper work can begin within the school community. However, educators need to utilize their knowledge of refugee experiences to create a community that has a foundation of mutual respect with an equity lens. For example, education professionals in schools and/or districts need to embrace the idea from research, which states “refugee students and their families have been, by definition, the target of repeated violence, discrimination, and trauma in their countries of origin” (Roxas, 2019, p. 3). These past experiences do not go away when individuals leave their home country or the situation. Trauma impacts the brain and the after effects of trauma and stress can stay with someone for a lifetime, especially children who experience severe trauma (The Center for Treatment of Anxiety and Mood Disorders, 2017). After understanding these potential experiences, the individual needs of students, and utilizing the equity lens, researchers and school personnel have completed more research identifying a sense of community as a change factor in the lives of refugee students.

As with any student and school building, creating a sense of community is essential to students feeling as if they belong, have ownership of their environment, and feel valued as a person with thoughts and feelings that are recognized and are appreciated (Roxas, 2019). Developing a sense of community is arguably even more essential for refugee students to become invested in their new environment, become connected to the wider neighborhood, and diminish the impact of the discrimination refugee students likely experienced in their counties of origin (Roxas, 2019). Therefore, building a community that accepts and embraces refugee students and families has a long history in educational research.

Cairo, Sumney, Blackman and Joyner (2012) engaged in research focused on building a sense of community in an elementary school with refugee students. In this research study, the researchers developed and implemented a program called F.A.C.E. Time (Families and Communities Educating). This program “consisted of an after school program dedicated to academic skills as well as social/behavioral adaptation and cultural expression for children from the third through fifth grade” (Cairo, Sumney, Blackman, & Joyner, 2012, p. 56). The program also occurred in the summer, which “included collaboration with a local learning center which provided hands-on science and mathematics lessons and a music school which provided either one-on-one or one-on-two private music lessons” (p. 56). Overall, the program was successful because of the “extensive time building community within the group, which directly contributed to the children’s sense of safety and belonging” (p. 57). Through this intentional practice, refugee students were able to create close relationships with peers and adults.

Another researcher, Kevin Roxas (2019), also studied the importance of building a community. However his study focused on older refugee students. In his study, he studied Ms. Patricia Engler’s classroom in a center for refugee students located in an urban setting. Ms. Engler’s students (refugee students) “face(d) problems such as poverty, depression, and loneliness. (They) often long(ed) for meaningful connections with their peers and teachers in school but sometimes struggle(d) in initiating and sustaining these relationships” (Roxas, 2019, p. 4). Furthermore, Ms. Engler realized an obstacle facing refugee students. In the classroom the refugee students were placed in situations where they were sitting next to or across from peers that were from ethnically diverse communities. These communities, in their shared home country, were in an oppressed and oppressor relationship. This created tensions and situations where peers had difficulty developing positive relationships due to past experiences and historical knowledge. However, Ms. Engler, recognizing this obstacle, purposefully planned strategies to develop a strong sense of community.

Roxas (2019) found that Ms. Engler developed a strong sense of community for refugee students through focusing on specialized needs of individual students from classroom activities to

impactful instructional strategies. One of the strategies involved connecting to the local community by bringing in members of the community to create mirrors and windows for the students and community members alike (Roxas, 2019). Additionally, Ms. Engler purposefully planned conversations and lessons to explore cultural norms, family norms, and gender norms from students' home countries. Most importantly, Ms. Engler quickly and directly addressed discriminatory language and actions in the classroom, letting students know that put-downs of any kind were not allowed in the classroom community (Roxas, 2019). Overall, "by explicitly focusing her instructional efforts on the building of community within the classroom environment, Engler was able to foster for refugee students and their families a sense of belonging and connectedness to local communities, schools, and classroom peers" (Roxas, 2019, p. 7).

Gahungu, Gahungu, and Luseno (2011) found similar results in their research study. These three researchers reported on the resettlement of 14 refugee high school students in Chicago, Illinois. Through their research they found that students needed individualized supports, embracing the equity lens. However, they also found that students needed to feel valued as a learning student. This concept came from the knowledge that many of the high school refugee students had limited to no content knowledge of like-aged peers in the United States due to an interrupted or cut off education (Gahungu, Gahungu & Luseno, 2011).

Utilizing the gained knowledge that many refugee students have interrupted or cut off education, the researchers raised the question of a practice known as social promotion, or the practice of promoting a student to maintain or increase their self-esteem, regardless of content mastery. The researchers found that the refugee students in this study had choppy educational experiences. One student skipped 5th through 8th grades, was placed in a 9th grade classroom, and then was later retained in grades 9th and 10th. Another skipped 5th and 6th grades. And, another student skipped kindergarten through 3rd grade, was enrolled in 7th grade, but was being taught 1st grade curriculum. These three examples are representative of the remainder of the students studied. While these researchers did not provide a strategy to avoid this practice, they did illustrate the social promotion practice in their research as a positive practice on building like-aged classrooms of strong communities (Gahungu, Gahungu, & Luseno, 2011). However, if viewing this practice from an equity lens, one might question the ethical nature of promoting a student to stay with like-aged peers, while diminishing the importance of academic content knowledge. The research on this topic continues.

Building from the findings of social promotion and a lack of formal education experienced by many refugee students, Eleni Oikonomidou (2010) conducted a research study based on the notion that refugee students entering western school environments have "undergone (a) sweeping cultural-shock experience of the initial relocation" (p. 74). She focused her research on refugee students' views and perceptions of the school curriculum and on classroom community, specifically teacher interactions with students.

Understanding the importance of a strong community, while also understanding the importance of quality curriculum, Oikonomidou (2010) dove into understanding how refugee students experience the curriculum. She found that refugee students solidly understood that comprehension of material is imperative, however a connection to the real world, specifically their lives, was often difficult or impossible.

After understanding refugee students' view of the curriculum, Oikonomidou (2010) focused on the refugee students' view of their teachers. The researcher found that "one key element of the students' narratives in relation to the development of a sense of identification with school was their view of the teachers" (p. 77). The interactions refugee students had with their teachers guided the

students' reflective thinking on how, if they were a teacher, they would show respect to the multicultural backgrounds of all students, including refugee students. These reflections by refugee students often accompanied a statement describing a disrespectful teacher-student encounter. Through this reflection process the researcher implied that the students desired mutually respectful communication in classrooms, especially with teachers who were still on their own learning journey towards accepting and incorporating linguistic identities, religion identities, and cultural identities into the classroom. Overall, there was not one large finding from this study, but the understanding that each refugee student experienced school in their own unique way. This supports the equity lens of education, along with the finding that when refugee students find the curriculum relatable and teachers accepting, relationships and learning experiences can thrive.

### **Family/Parent Engagement**

Ensuring that refugee students feel included and are part of the overall school community is important, however including parents is also important to the overall education of refugee students. However, it has been noted that the inclusion of families can be hindered by biased views on the part of the education professional. Two researchers, Roy and Roxas (2011), found that many times teachers have misconceived notions regarding the families' home countries and their values. These biased views impacted the teachers' understanding of the families' educational goals and clouded the teachers' view of the student overall.

In this specific study (Roy & Roxas, 2011), which included Somali Bantu refugee families, it was discovered that the definition of "educational goals" had different, not better or worse, but different definitions and actions as discussed with the teachers and the refugee families. The families described the high value placed on education through storytelling, which created a sense of belonging and historical understanding, as well as embedded values. Conversely, a strong value is not placed on pure storytelling in western school systems, which was evident in the teacher perceptions of refugee education. This misunderstanding of what education is or looks like created interactions where teachers entered with a deficit mindset, or the mindset that the refugee students and families had nothing to offer because they had not received formal schooling in their home country. This created missed learning opportunities. It was noted, however, that a paradigm shift was made when teachers learned and understood that refugee students, specifically the students in their school (Somali Bantu refugees) had many educational experiences, the experiences were just not the experiences of "doing school" (Roy & Roxas, 2011), but rather value and story based.

The learning process of engaging refugee parents in schools can be found through many paths. One path was researched at a public school in Wisconsin. The research focused on ways to facilitate impactful and effective parent involvement (Rah, Choi & Nguyen, 2010). The research study was conducted through interviews with refugee parents. After the interviews, but prior to developing strategies that facilitate refugee parent involvement, the school and researchers outlined barriers that refugee families faced. The barriers were found through analyzing the interviews. These barriers had the potential to impact the families' involvement in school events. Some of the barriers included language, socioeconomic status, traditional family structures, and deferential attitudes towards school authority.

After understanding the barriers, the school was able to develop useful strategies based on the parent interviews. The strategies included developing a parent liaison position, using community resources, and providing education programs for parents. Through these strategies, parents felt more connected to the school, community, and overall culture. Additionally families were



developing skills through education programs provided by the school (Rah, Choi, & Nguyen, 2010).

The engagement of parents, as with any set of students, has the potential to improve several factors focused on student, family, and school benefits. Specifically, when parents are engaged students' social skills, ability to self-regulate, and attitudes are improved. Families feel empowered and the staff morale of the school improves. Additionally, engagement of family members/parents also reduces dropout rates and a feeling of "us" versus "them," especially in the case of refugee families who are often marginalized or invisible (National Charter Research Center, 2011).

Overall, the review of literature from 2009–2019 found three overarching concepts, while also embracing the equity lens. First, community resources and school resources need to be identified and utilized. This includes educating or hiring teachers who are knowledgeable in multicultural and/or refugee education. Second, students need to feel connected to the overall school and classroom community through teacher interactions, peer interactions, and inclusive curriculum. Finally, involving parents in a meaningful way is essential to developing an overall sense of community and ownership of personal learning.

### **Student/Family Background Factors**

The background factors of the revised conceptual framework include human capital, cultural capital, modes of incorporation, and family structure. According to Portes and Rumbaut (2001), human capital refers to the skills that students and parents bring in the form of education, work experience, and language knowledge that make individuals productive at home, school, and work, which also could be referred to as their funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Cultural capital, in reference to education, refers to the family values that facilitate access to education (Portes, 2000). Modes of incorporation include how the community allows or denies refugee families use of their human and cultural capital to promote successful economic and social adaptation. Family structure, as with any family, refers to the members that are included in the immediate family.

The background factor that focused on the use of the cultural and human capital (modes of incorporation) was most prominent in the literature review. It was evident that members of society, and specifically school personnel, need to recognize the funds of knowledge (cultural capital) refugee families bring with them into the community and school building. The recognition and acceptance can guide schools towards an equity lens, which in turn ensures each student is seen as an individual.

Through the process of learning and investigating best practices for refugee students, teachers are able to embrace the idea of education as important in the lives of the refugee families as a whole. However, as evident in the research, some school personnel need to re-conceptualize the idea of what school and education means to people from around the world, specifically refugee students who may have had an interruption in their formal education. The education that refugee students bring with them, though, is abundant from stories they learn throughout their life, the experiences they live through, and the resilience they demonstrate as a family. Fully understanding the human and cultural capital of each refugee student and family builds a mutually respectful community that is based in equity and not equality.

### **Obstacles and Social Capital**

Although, in the overall framework acculturation was added, through the analysis process acculturation was wrapped into the concept of obstacles and social capital. This was due to the fact

that the acculturation patterns of learning a new language and culture have the potential to lead refugee students “into segmented paths when faced with two main obstacles: unwelcoming climate and discrimination, which can be translated into social and individual rejection” (Lee, 2011, p. 11). Through the review of literature, the potential for social and academic rejection was prominent, especially in the practice of social promotion.

However, facing the challenge of social rejection, researchers have utilized the concept of building a strong and welcoming community as the literature backbone. Additionally, linking refugee families and students to the supports and needed resources was found to be essential in addressing psychological and physical health concerns. This addresses the concept of rejection from an equity lens.

As stated in the research, refugee families and students come from war torn countries, stress, trauma, and experiences that are often not valued in the United States educational system. However, assisting refugee students and families to seek the needed resources to build a strong supportive circle, in the school and wider community, develops the social structures and networks needed to be successful long term. Hence the building of one’s social capital, or the ability to acquire access to resources through connections between individuals or membership in social networks and other social structures, which is key to confronting obstacles creating a pathway to successful adaptation and acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

The human, cultural, and social capitals of refugee families and students are at the core of the equity lens. Ensuring that the skills and knowledge refugee students bring to the classroom are valued and accepted, educators developing a full understanding of the educational experiences of refugee students, and family’s needs being addressed to develop networks for resource gains is imperative to the success of refugee students in school communities.

### **Implications**

The implications that can be drawn from this review of current research focused on strategies to effectively educate and accept refugee students in educational settings. There are two main implications, which also lead to future research in the field of refugee education. First is the concept of social promotion. Second is the concept of educating from a holistic mindset.

Social promotion, as stated in the review of literature, is the process of promoting a student to maintain or increase their self-esteem, regardless of content mastery. This means that students are with like-aged peers regardless of content knowledge. There are two opposing views to this phenomenon. One view is that social promotion enables the student to develop social skills, preventing a feeling of isolation, which could occur if placed with underage-peers in a classroom setting. The opposing view is that academic knowledge and learning is more important than the social well-being of the student, in addition to the hardships placed on teachers who would be tasked with the duty of implementing non-grade specific content. For example, teaching 1st grade content to one student in a 7th grade classroom. This is still an area of research that needs to be undertaken as a way to understand how to fully embrace, education, and promote refugee students who might have had an interruption in their formal educational career. However, from the literature review it can be implied that social promotion is a worthwhile practice to ensure students feel welcomed and accepted. While it would inevitably be a hardship on teachers, trainings and more staff would help with this potential burden.

The other implication from this study is the idea of educating the whole child/student. This concept was apparent in the knowledge that teachers need to be able to understand the students prearrival experiences, be trained in how to help students cope with prearrival and postarrival

situations, and include the parents/families in the educational process. While none of these concepts are new to the world of education, it is a change in mindset, one from a deficit mindset to an asset based mindset, for many individuals who are working with refugee students because of the varying and diverse backgrounds and experiences that come into the classroom. In addition to educating the whole student, teachers need to be trained in a way to embrace funds of knowledge and students' capitals to ensure classrooms are welcoming, accepting, and overall non-threatening.

While continued research is desired in the field of refugee education, the implications from this literature review speak to the intense training and thought that has been and should be put into the planning and education of refugee students. While readiness and education efforts are often placed in teacher preparation programs, there are also policy and procedures changes that can be made within school districts to ensure that training and continued professional development support the ever-changing needs of teachers and students.

### **Conclusion**

Refugee families have been, currently are, and will be entering the United States. This is an inevitable group of students entering the school system. Whether a community sees the refugee families as a threat or asset to a community, it is the goal of educators to fully accept and welcome refugee students with the common goal of high quality education.

As noted in the review of literature, there are many factors that influence the educational experiences of refugee students, from prearrival to postarrival experiences. However, as is also evident in the review of current literature, there is a clear understanding of what needs to happen prearrival in school buildings, however there are often areas for reflection and improvement during postarrival.

The concepts found through the literature review include the importance of resources, building a strong sense of community through strategies that address the overall needs of refugee students and families, and including families in the education of their children. All three of these themes are important and can guide schools around the country in implementing practices and procedures that welcome, accept, and education refugee students from an asset based mindset.

Refugee children, as well as American born children, are the future of our nation and world. Providing refugee children the same quality and equitable education children in the United States have access to, is imperative to our future. American born children, immigrant children, migrant children, and refugee children are the future of our world, so educating the next generation with care and acceptance should be the goal.

## References

- Cairo, A., Sumney, D., Blackman, J., & Joyner, K. (2012). F.A.C.E. Time (Families and Communities Educating): Accommodating newcomers in elementary schools. *Multicultural Education, 19*(2), 55–58. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1001527.pdf>
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2015). *The Educational Experiences of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum*. Retrieved from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/educational-experiences-refugee-children-countries-first-asylum>
- Ferriss, S. S. & Forrest-Bank, S. S. (2018). Perspectives of Somali refugees on post-traumatic growth after resettlement. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 31*(4), 626–646.
- Gahungu, A., Gahungu, O., & Luseno, F. (2011). Educating culturally displaced students with truncated formal education (CDS-TFE): The case of refugee students and challenges for administrators, teachers, and counselors'. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 6*(2). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED521062.pdf>
- International Rescue Committee. (2018). *Migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants: What's the difference?* Retrieved from <https://www.rescue.org/article/migrants-asylum-seekers-refugees-and-immigrants-whats-difference>
- Lee, J. G. (2011). Understanding the process of educational assimilation for refugee and non-refugee immigrant students: A pilot study of a community college. [Thesis]. Retrieved from <https://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu/available/etd-07182011-140816/unrestricted/MastersThesisFinal.pdf>
- McLeod, S. (2017). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. *Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>
- Moll, L., Amanti, C., Neff, D. and Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice, XXXI* (2), 132–141.
- National Charter School Research Center. (2011). *Parent involvement provides opportunity, challenge for charter school*. Retrieved from <https://charterschoolcenter.ed.gov/newsletter/december-2011-parental-involvement-provides-opportunity-challenge-charter-schools>
- Nur, S. & Hunter, R. C. (2009). Educating immigrant students in urban districts. *School Business Affairs, 75*(6), 31–33. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ919344.pdf>
- Oikonomidou, E. (2010). Zooming into the school narratives of refugee students. *Multicultural Perspectives, 12*(2), 74–80.
- Olneck, M. (2000). Can multicultural education change what counts as cultural capital? *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(2), 317–348.
- Portes, A. (2000). The two meanings of social capital. *Sociological Forum, 15*(1), 1–12. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3070334>
- Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2001). *Legacies: The story of immigrant second generation*. University of California Press.

- Portes, A., & Zhou, M. (1993). The new second generation: Segmented assimilation and its variants. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716293530001006>
- Rah, Y., Choi, S. & Nguyen, T. S. T. (2010). Building bridges between refugee parents and schools. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. 12(4), 347–365.
- Roxas, K. (2019). Creating communities: Working with refugee students in classrooms. *Democracy & Education*, 19(2), 1–8. Retrieved from <https://democracyeducationjournal.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=home>
- Roy, L. & Roxas, K. (2011). Whose deficit is this anyhow? Exploring counter-stories of Bantu refugees' experiences in “doing school”. *Harvard Educational Review*, 81(3), 521–542.
- Sime, D. (2018) *Educating migrant and refugee pupils*. In: *Scottish Education*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh. ISBN 9781474437844. Retrieved from [https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/60977/1/Sime\\_2017\\_Educating\\_migrant\\_and\\_refugee\\_pupils.pdf](https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/60977/1/Sime_2017_Educating_migrant_and_refugee_pupils.pdf)
- The Center for Treatment of Anxiety and Mood Disorders. (2017). *What is trauma?* Retrieved from <https://centerforanxietydisorders.com/what-is-trauma/>
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- The United Nations Refugee Agency. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/>
- Thinkingmaps.com. (2018). *Equity in Education: What it is and why it matters?* Retrieved from <https://www.thinkingmaps.com/equity-education-matters/>
- Yuhas, A. (2018). *Trump administration set to admit far fewer refugees than plan allows for*. The Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jan/26/trump-administration-refugees-resettlement>