

**Harvesting hardships in Florida:
Educators' views on the challenges of migrant students and their consequences on
education**

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study examines the hardships experienced by migrant students, most of them immigrants or children of immigrants, drawing on in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 migrant educators employed in the public school system in Florida in 2013. We examine migrant students' hardships and analyze the impact they have on their learning and educational success. We found that migrant students face five major hardships: (1) cultural barriers, including language and communication and students' and parents' knowledge, interactions and involvement with school; (2) challenges related to family and care, such as parental absence and working conditions, family structure, children's care responsibilities for younger siblings; (3) material needs, especially poverty, hunger, housing, underage child labor, transportation, and health issues; (4) educational challenges as a result of students' migratory lifestyles, lack of school supplies and teachers' lack of knowledge about and attitudes towards migrant students; and (5) hardships related to undocumented legal status. We show how these hardships result in specific emotional, physical, practical and social consequences that adversely affect migrant students' education. Lastly, we discuss our findings in the context of existing scholarship and present implications for policy and future research.

Keywords: education; immigrant children; migrant students; social mobility; undocumented legal status; United States

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1. Introduction

Fifty years ago, in 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared the “War on Poverty,” introducing social and economic programs that would lift millions of children out of poverty over the following decades (Sparks, 2014). In his 1964 State of the Union address, President Johnson stated that the cause of poverty may lie “in our failure to give our fellow citizens a fair chance to develop their own capacities” (Sparks, 2014: <http://www.edweek/org>). In order to level the educational playing field for the children of migrant agricultural workers— laborers who migrate across the country to follow the crops— the Johnson Administration created Title I grants under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. These funds pay for special programs and services for the children of migrant agricultural workers (State of Washington, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2014).¹ In the United States, there are currently over three million migrant farmworkers (NCFH, 2012) and an estimated 500,000-800,000 school age migrant students (McHatton, Zalaquett, & Cranson-Gingras, 2006).

This article analyzes the educational impact of the hardships experienced by migrant students from the perspective of twenty educators who are employed through the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in one county in Florida. For the purpose of this study, we use the term “migrant educators” to refer to employees of the MEP who work to further migrant students’ education, including certified migrant teachers, migrant teacher aides, paraprofessionals, and clerical workers. It is particularly interesting to obtain migrant educators’ views because they are the “street-level bureaucrats” (Lipsky, 1980; Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003) who have profound insights into the challenges that migrant students face.

¹ In recent years, Title 1, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, allocated funding to migrant students through Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) (Murray, 2013).

Despite consistent federal efforts, the children of migrant farmworkers fall behind in school. For example, they are typically a year older than other children in their grade and at least a year and a half behind in the curriculum (Lundy-Ponce, 2010). They are “significantly marginalized and underserved” (Bejarano & Valverde, 2012, p. 22), resulting in only 50.7% of migrant students successfully graduating from high school (BOCES, 2009). Given the achievement gap between migrant and non-migrant students and the incompatibility between these students’ characteristics and the U.S. school system, it is salient to investigate the processes by which migrant students’ hardships, such as poverty (Romanowski, 2003), the language barrier (Collins, 2012; Green, 2003), and the transiency of the migrant lifestyle (BOCES, 2009; McHatton et al., 2006) affect students’ learning outcomes.

As most of migrant students are immigrants or the children of immigrants, it is also important to think about the impact that education could have on the integration of these students into U.S. society. Portes and Zhou (1993) and Zhou (1997) have shown that the paths towards immigrant integration are stratified by social class— a phenomenon they have called “segmented assimilation” — immigrants either adapt through integration into the middle-class; experience assimilation into the working class or permanent poverty, or achieve economic advancement with the intention to preserve community values and ties (Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 82). If we as a society are interested in avoiding immigrant migrant students’ assimilation into permanent poverty, then this study is particularly relevant because high school completion is a factor that reduces the risk of poverty (Iceland, 2006).

Our study explores migrant students’ hardships and analyzes the negative consequences of these hardships on students’ learning processes and, ultimately, educational outcomes. Our study addresses the following research questions: (1) What are the hardships that migrant

students experience? (2) How do these hardships adversely affect migrant students' learning processes and educational outcomes?

2. Theoretical framework

These research questions and our analysis of the data are informed by the ideas and concepts developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), Blandina and Jose Cardenas (1977), and Annette Lareau (2002). While Bourdieu and Lareau theorize about the resources that adversely affect poor and working-class students in the educational process, Cardenas and Cardenas highlight the systemic deficiencies of the school system with regard to minority and poor students. Bourdieu (1986) differentiated between three different types of capital that may affect social mobility and life chances: (1) economic or financial capital, such as parental income, wealth, and assets; (2) cultural capital, including language proficiency and the ability to consume cultural objects, such as music and art; and (3) social capital, the networks and social ties that may prove useful (or harmful) in furthering students' academic and social success (Bourdieu, 1986; Weininger, 2005). Bourdieu pointed out that economic capital will allow a family to buy the time and resources needed to bolster their cultural and social capital; in that way, the three forms of capital are profoundly interrelated. His theory is useful in framing our study because it shows how different types of resources (or capital) may cause adverse effects on mobility for economically disadvantaged students, such as migrant students. This theory has informed our analysis by focusing us on these different types of capital.

Relatedly, Lareau's (2002; 2003) study built on and used Bourdieu's theoretical concepts to compare how (Black and White) working class/poor parents and middle-class parents in the United States use these different types of capital when interacting with the school system. Most

importantly for this present study, Lareau found that parenting approaches and interactions with professionals differ significantly across classes (but not race): while middle-class children feel a sense of entitlement when dealing with teachers, working-class and poor children feel a sense of constraint; working-class and poor children and parents are deferential and outwardly accepting, but distrust professionals, such as teachers. Middle-class children and parents act in an assertive manner, question professionals, and intervene on behalf of themselves and their children (Lareau, 2002; 2003). Lareau termed the parenting approach of working-class and poor families “the accomplishment of natural growth” (2002, p. 747) and the approach of middle class families “concerted cultivation” (2002, p. 747).

Cardenas and Cardenas’s (1977) theory of incompatibilities casts light on how the resources that migrant students bring to the educational process interact with the public school system: Cardenas (1974), who studied the causes of the achievement gap between Black and Mexican-American students and “White Anglo” students in the Denver public schools, argued that the education system itself, not minority families’ deficiencies, must be held responsible for the failure of minority and poor students. Cardenas (1974) and Cardenas and Cardenas (1977) assert that typical instructional programs are geared towards middle-class students and are therefore incompatible with the characteristics of Black, Mexican-American, and economically disadvantaged children, such as the children who are the focus of this present study. The authors identified poverty, culture, language, mobility, and social perceptions as interrelated and interdependent domains that affect children’s education. Poverty affects children’s overall development and speech patterns and “an absence of success models and academic oriented tradition develop differing concepts toward schools and schooling” (Cardenas, 1974, p. 9); poverty also leads to “a relative unavailability of intellectually stimulating toys, games, and

activities” (Cardenas, 1974, p. 9). Children are also affected by poverty because poor housing, malnutrition, and health adversely affect poor children’s development. Schools are “culturally biased institutions” (Cardenas, 1974, p. 13) because school personnel may know nothing about the cultures of minority students and/or do not act on the knowledge they do have and/or stereotype minority children, for instance in instruction materials. Cardenas and Cardenas also point out the trauma to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners, resulting from an immersion or “cold turkey approach” (Cardenas, 1974, p. 14) to English language acquisition. The authors criticize that ESOL programs postpone the child’s development of skills and acquisition of content while diminishing the value of the child’s native language; emphasize that instructional programs are (erroneously) built on the assumption that students are not mobile, which they are; and stress how schools will result in minority children’s negative self-perception: “in general, the negative feelings which schools hold and express to minority children lead to the development of very low levels of expectancy for the performance of these children, and all children tend to perform in keeping with what is expected of them” (Cardenas, 1974, p. 16).

Building on Bourdieu’s theory, we assumed that migrant students’ financial capital, cultural capital, and social capital may adversely affect migrant students’ educational outcomes. Given Lareau’s findings on the parenting approach of poor and working-class families, such as the families of migrant farmworkers, we also assumed that migrant parents and children would act deferentially towards teachers and not actively intervene with teachers in the education process on children’s behalf. Cardenas and Cardenas’ work suggests that schools do not accommodate the specific needs of migrant students, stereotype them, and increase their negative self-perceptions.

3. Literature review

There is robust empirical evidence on the hardships of migrant agricultural farmworkers and their children (Bejarano and Valverde, 2012; Cobb-Clark, Sinning & Stillman, 2012; Collins, 2012; Embrey et al., 2001; Green, 2003; Holmes, 2013; Johnson, 1987), and there are strong evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of MEP programs (Florida, 2007; Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009; Johnson, 1987; Waller & Crawford, 2001); however, we know little about the process by which the hardships of migrant students translate into negative learning processes and educational outcomes from the viewpoint of their educators. While Salinas and Reyes' (2004) qualitative study examined the interactions between migrant educators (administrators and counselors) and migrant students, they did not specifically address the goal of this present study. One study that focuses specifically on migrant students' classroom experiences (Romanowski, 2001; 2003) examined an eight-week summer school program in rural Ohio based on non-participant observation and in-depth interviews with students, teachers, and school administrators (Romanowski, 2001; 2003). Romanowski's study provides an important and unique perspective on migrant advocates and their role (2001), as well as the role of cultural capital in educating migrant students (2003). Yet neither Romanowski's (2001) or Salinas and Reyes' (2004) studies include educators' perspectives on how migrant student hardships impact their academic success as the current study seeks to do.

In terms of challenges encountered by migrant students, previous research has shown that migrant children may experience several hardships (Romanowski, 2003). These include their parents' low wages—migrant families' earnings lie well below the national poverty line, without benefits or worker's compensation (NCFH, 2012, p. 2). Half of all migrant farmworker families earn less than \$10,000 per year (Embrey et al., 2001, p.7) and they are rarely paid by the hour,

but by piece weight of buckets of the crops they pick (Embrey et al., 2001). Low family-income resulting in poverty means that children's additional income may be needed so families can make ends meet, which pulls children out of school and into the (low-wage) labor force (Embrey et al., 2001; Bejarano and Valverde, 2012; Green, 2003; Johnson, 1987).

Other well-documented hardships of migrant students include constant migration (Romanowski, 2003); the language barrier and legal status (Green, 2003); lack of parental education and family support (Cobb-Clark, Sinning & Stillman, 2012; Johnson, 1987); negative backlashes against the Hispanic community (Urrieta, 2004); and lack of effective partnership between the staff at MEPs and other school personnel (Johnson, 1987). In terms of legal status, Gonzales (2011) and Gonzales and Chavez (2012) have likened the social and psychological consequences of the undocumented status of the 1.5 generation Latino immigrants to a “nightmare” (Gonzales & Chavez, 2012), demonstrating that there are numerous consequences affecting young adults' identity and aspirations, including feelings of constriction, immobility, and fear. Abrego's (2011) study of the legal consciousness of undocumented Latino immigrants also demonstrates the presence of fear (among first-generation undocumented immigrants) and stigma (among the 1.5 generation). Constant migration has been shown to lead to students being placed in incorrect grade levels as they change schools, students missing significant amounts of classroom time at the start and end of the year, students not being present for standardized tests which are mandatory for grade completion, and students' records being incorrect or lost due to multiple transitions from school to school throughout the year (Branz-Spall, Rosenthal, and Wright, 2003; Romanowski, 2003).

Gibson and Hidalgo (2009) found that most immigrant parents from Mexico place great value on their children's schooling and want them to finish high school and attend college.

Similarly, Araujo (2006) developed a concept called “pedagogies of the field” to describe students’ reflections on the motivation they developed to succeed academically by working in the fields themselves and/or watching their parents work in the fields (p. 143). Despite these positive influences, numerous other studies, such as Bejarano and Valverdes (2009) or Cobb-Clark, Sinning and Stillman (2012), on the other hand, demonstrated that it was largely family influences that affected the achievement gap between migrant and non-migrant students, especially when students decided not to pursue their high school education and started working. Green (2003) suggested that some parents of migrant students who have not been well-educated themselves may view school attendance as less important when their children could earn much-needed money in the fields or stay at home to care for younger siblings while parents work long hours. He argues that the lack of knowledge and awareness regarding the importance of education causes undue stress on the migrant students and often results in students missing school or dropping out altogether (Green, 2003). There are also some migrant worker parents who may want an education for their children, yet they have developed negative attitudes toward school due to the unreceptiveness of teachers and administrators towards their cultural values and beliefs; therefore, they do not become active participants in their children’s education (Lopez, Scribner, & Mahitivanichcha, 2001).

Given these prior research findings, we expected to find hardships related to poverty, the language barrier, migrant families’ migratory lifestyle, legal status, and parental support for education. We expected to find that poverty would negatively affects migrant students’ education because it would result in students skipping school or dropping out of school altogether to work to support their families; that the language barrier would negatively affect migrant students because they may not be able to understand the lessons in the classroom nor

communicate effectively with their teachers; additionally, parents may not be able to communicate with teachers about their children's education. We also hypothesized that the migratory lifestyle would adversely affect students due to its transitory and often unstable nature. Further, we assumed to find that parental support would either positively or negatively affect students' learning; and that the feelings of fear, stigma, and immobility associated with legal status might have negative educational consequences.

4. The Migrant Education Program

The MEP is a federally-funded program that was enacted in 1966 as an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It targets students whose school years are interrupted because their families travel for work and who need to learn English as their second language. The program reaches over 485,000 students across 49 states (Johnson, 1987; Lundy-Ponce, 2010). The state of Florida alone allocated \$21 million to its 67 school districts for this program for school year 2005-2006 (Florida Advisory Committee, 2007). The main goals of the program are student identification and recruitment, interstate and intrastate coordination among schools, and advocacy and family support (Florida Advisory Committee, 2007).

The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 defines migrant students as "children of workers who move with their families to seek temporary or seasonal work in factories, agriculture, or fishing" (Green, 2003, p. 52). In this article, we will focus only on the children of agricultural migrant workers and will refer to them as "migrant students" or "migrant children." It is important to note that the majority of these children are first-generation, 1.5 generation, or second-generation immigrants to the United States. In Florida, 75 percent of the 120,000 migrant farmworkers in the state were born outside the U.S. (Florida Advisory Committee,

2007). The migrant students whose hardships we analyze in this paper are mainly of Hispanic descent (Embrey et al., 2001) and may be foreign-born or native-born; they may be citizens, green card, or visa holders, or they may be undocumented. (Data about the citizenship or legal status of this student population are not available.)

The evaluations and analyses of MEPs that have evolved since the 1980s have shown that the supplemental services provided by MEPs, especially the relationships created between students and school, positively affect student success in the classroom, as well as parents' support of children's education (Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009.) For instance, Waller and Crawford (2001), who evaluated one program in Florida, found that the program effectively dealt with poverty, cultural and language barriers, and constant migration with the help of childcare and reading programs, a health education center, cultural studies, and satellite centers. Ochoa and Cadiero-Kaplan (2004), who gathered survey responses from several school sites to evaluate programs across numerous criteria, found that all school sites evidenced an understanding and value for bi-literacy, as well as a focus on high achievement in the subjects of reading and math. However, Spanish literacy interventions were very rare. Another study in Florida (Florida, 2007), which examined the teacher-student ratios, staff-student ratios, computer technology and library resources, compared migrant schools to non-migrant schools in two of five representative school districts in Florida. This study showed that even though the migrant schools had more staff and smaller class sizes, students' academic performance was lower in comparison to students at non-migrant students. Computer and literacy resources were also found to vary across schools (Florida, 2007).

5. Research Methods

5.1. Data collection

We employed a qualitative methodological approach for this study as we sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the migrant educators' perspectives on the hardships faced by migrant students and their influence on students' educational performance. We sought answers to our research questions by identifying broad themes and patterns that emerged from the data (Creswell, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We analyzed data from in-depth, semi-structured interviews that the first author conducted with 20 employees of a Migrant Education Program in 'Sunshine County,'² Florida, in March 2013. The only full-time employees of the MEP who were not included were the Director of the Program and two secretaries. (These individuals were not interviewed because none of these positions had extended contact with the students on a regular basis). We chose 'Sunshine County' because it houses a sizable Hispanic population (many of whom live in one of three large migrant camps in the vicinity) and employs a large number of migrant agricultural workers. In addition, the first author was able to gain access to this migrant education program with the help of one of the program's administrators. The majority of the schools represented in this study are located in or near one of the three large migrant camps in 'Sunshine County' and all of the schools are part of the public school system. A "migrant camp" is defined as a settlement of about 2,000 migrant workers and their children (Florida Advisory Committee, 2007). There are an estimated 120,000 migrant farmworkers in Florida in total (Florida Advisory Committee, 2007). Of the estimated 348,000 students enrolled in the school district in the county, 2,900 are migrant students-- less than 1% of all students enrolled in the county (USDE, 2003-2004). Migrant students are unique in that they travel with their families following the crops on a seasonal basis. Many of the migrants based in Florida

² 'Sunshine County' is a pseudonym for one of the 67 counties in the State of Florida.

travel on the “eastern stream,” one of three main migrant agricultural routes in the U.S., which includes Southern states and the eastern seaboard. Florida is ranked third in the country for the highest concentration of migrant children, trumped only by Texas and California (Florida Advisory Committee, 2007).

This study received approval from the Committee for the Protection of Human Participants in Research at Emmanuel College. The first author recruited participants via e-mail with the help of one of the MEP’s administrators for ‘Sunshine County’ Public Schools. Participants were informed that interviews were voluntary and would last between 45 minutes to one hour. Each participant signed an Informed Consent form before the interview began. The interviews, which lasted 37 minutes on average, were conducted at the participant’s respective office or school. Participants received a \$25 Target gift card for their time and participation. The interview contained fourteen open-ended questions and six structured questions. Interview questions relevant to this study included the following: “Please describe the students you teach in the program.” “What are their academic strengths?” “What are their academic weaknesses?” “If you have worked with non-migrant students previously, how is teaching migrant students different than non-migrant students?” “What are some of the hardships your students face?” and “In what ways do these hardships affect your students?” All of the interviews were digitally recorded with participants’ permission and then transcribed verbatim. All data were de-identified and pseudonyms were used for publications.

5.2. Sample

As Table 1 shows, the sample consisted of mostly female educators, most of whom were native-born and English native speakers.

[Insert table 1 here.]

Nine of the participants (45%) identified as migrant teachers advocates, another nine (45%) as paraprofessionals or/teacher's aides (this included seven paraprofessionals and two teacher's aides), and the remaining two (10%) as clerical staff. Four participants taught or supported pre-school aged students, six elementary school-aged students, three supported middle school students, and five supported high school students. One of the two remaining participants served as the migrant students' academic records keeper for all migrant students, and the other was a parent specialist working as the liaison between the schools/teachers and the parents. Interestingly, just over a half of study participants reported that they had been migrant workers themselves, either in the past or currently working as migrant workers part-time, even though they were no longer transitory. Almost all of the educators reported that either their parents or their grandparents were migrant workers. The migrant teachers (certified by the state) had earned a minimum of a Bachelor's degree, two had completed their Master's degrees, and one was in the process of attaining a Master's degree. All of the paraprofessionals, teacher's aides, and clerical workers had completed high school. The average years of experience working with migrant students was 15.0 years, with a minimum of less than one year and a maximum of 34 years (this information is based on self-reports from participants). Although exact ages of the participants are not known, we know that there was a wide range of ages represented, with the youngest educators still in college, and the oldest educators in their 60s.

5.3. Data analysis and limitations

We analyzed the interview transcripts in four stages: first, the first author wrote descriptive memos after each interview while still in the field to identify preliminary themes,

patterns, and trends (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Second, the first author and two research assistants coded a randomly selected subset of three interview transcripts to identify initial themes. The three coders then decided on initial codes and code definitions to increase consistency in coding and facilitate generation and verification of connections among codes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). Third, the first author and one research assistant independently coded all transcripts in Atlas.ti, a qualitative coding software, using the codebook they had generated in the previous step. They continued to compare codes and discussed any additional codes that needed to be added or edited. If a code was added or significantly edited, the coders re-coded all prior transcripts. Disagreements over codes were few, but when they occurred, the coders discussed their differing opinions until they reached agreement. This type of multi-step process, which involves multiple coders, increases inter-coder reliability (Creswell, 2013) and facilitates the development of consistent core themes (Patton, 2002). Fourth, the second research assistant reviewed the accuracy of all the codes in all transcripts, and the first author and the two research assistants then compared and discussed any differences among codes applied by researchers. At the same time, the second author read all the interview transcripts and created a matrix containing the main themes and codes of each interview pertaining to the two research questions. The first and second author then compared the themes they found and the frequency at which they occurred. (Table 2 shows the outcome of this process.) Finally, to increase validity when reporting on the data, the researchers utilized direct quotes from the interview data as frequently as possible within the scope of the article.

The following procedures were employed to increase reliability: all transcripts were checked twice for errors and accuracy during transcription and ensured that there was little to no drift from the code definitions by creating a code sheet containing a detailed definition of codes.

We also constantly compared codes among researchers and wrote memos about the codes; held frequent meetings with researchers to discuss codes, and communicated about any discrepancies. By conducting interviews with individuals who represented various positions in different offices and from various schools within the program, the primary author was able to triangulate the data, in addition to triangulating the data by comparing it to previous research (Bailey, 2007; Creswell, 2013).

The main limitation of this study is the small number of participants, all of whom are from the same MEP, limits the scope of analysis and does not allow for generalizing to other migrant programs or educators' experiences. That being said, the first author did interview every employee of the program who had regular contact with the students, which provided a significant amount of depth and breadth of information about this particular program.

6. Findings: harvesting hardships

When asked about the hardships that migrant students face, 'Allie's' comment encapsulated many of the main findings of this study. She stated, "there are a lot of kids that have so many problems." Migrant students face numerous hardships that may adversely affect their learning process and educational success-- they *harvest hardships* on numerous levels. The five categories of hardships we identified, as listed by frequency of occurrence and in alphabetical order in table 2, are: (1) cultural barriers; (2) family and care-related hardships; (3) material needs; (4) educational challenges, and (5) hardships related to legal status. The negative consequences on students' education range from not understanding the teacher, students acting out in class, emotionally withdrawing from education, getting retained a year, being suspended and dropping out of school altogether.

[Insert table 2 here.]

We separated these hardships for analytical purposes to create “ideal types,” following a tradition of social analysis established by Sociologist Max Weber (Weber, 1904). These hardships are closely intertwined with each other, as Cardenas and Cardenas’ (1974) work also suggests: for instance, migrant workers families’ low wages (material needs) mean that they typically cannot afford a computer or Internet access. This results in migrant students not being able to complete school assignments at home — an educational challenge. Because of migrant workers’ meager earnings, parents spend many daytime hours working, including numerous nights and weekends; as a result, they may not be able to check their children’s homework, read with them, participate in children’s school-related activities, or intervene at school on their children’s behalf; all of these represent cultural and educational barriers.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a detailed discussion of migrant families’ strengths, it is certainly noteworthy that many of the educators we interviewed mentioned that migrant students benefit from their own and their families’ strengths. They said that parents of migrant students were hard-working, respected teachers, valued education, were responsive to teachers’ suggestions, and had high aspirations for their children. They also mentioned that children benefitted from close-knit, sometimes extended families, and a supportive community of friends, which allowed educators to easily detect problems and provide support for their students. Many study participants also stated that migrant students were smart, strong in math, and showed great passion for learning. On the positive side of the ledger, another analysis of the same data that we are using here showed that migrant educators provided invaluable support to migrant students (see Križ and Free, in preparation).

6.1. Cultural barriers

The term ‘cultural barriers’ refers to two educational barriers: first, it refers to barriers related to migrant students’ and parents’ cultural capital (as understood by Bourdieu), especially challenges involving language and communication (students’ and parents’ ability to speak and read in English). Second, the term ‘cultural barriers’ also refers to migrant families’ parenting approach with regard to education, which bears the characteristics of “the accomplishment of natural growth” parenting approach (Lareau, 2002; 2003), especially students’ and parents’ level of knowledge about the school system, their attitudes towards teachers and education, and their level and kind of involvement with the school system.

6.1.1. Language and communication

Almost all educators in this study viewed language as an educational barrier for migrant students, especially if their families were recent immigrants: students and parents had trouble communicating with educators and educators had trouble communicating with them. Educators of pre-school migrant students, particularly those who were not bilingual, mentioned that they had problems understanding their ESOL migrant students. Study participants who taught in a classroom setting emphasized that their students experienced difficulties in understanding them in class, and students had trouble comprehending the reading; however, many educators also regaled in stories about the great strides that younger students make when learning to speak English in only a couple of months; a few study participants emphasized that their students loved reading and learning new vocabulary. (Two educators mentioned that ESOL students disliked reading.)

Several study participants also said that it was difficult for students to complete their homework because of their and their parents' language barrier: parents may not speak English proficiently enough, or they may not be literate. 'Allie' provided an example of how parents' language proficiency affected migrant students' learning: "a huge percentage of [their parents] don't speak English, so they have no one really to go home to the dinner table and talk to about current events that they probably are going to talk about at school."

Several study participants stated that students may get retained as a result of their level of English proficiency, which may lead to students feeling demotivated and discouraged. Educators mentioned self-esteem and behavioral issues and, in the worst case scenario, school dropout, as a consequence of language-related issues. 'Jane's' outlook on the impact of the language barrier was bleak: she felt that (older) ESOL students may become demotivated and distance themselves from learning and school entirely because they fall through the cracks of a system that was not conceptualized to help them. 'Sarah' felt that language-related challenges and poverty led to students being retained, which may launch a negative chain reaction resulting in students dropping out of school. She told us that retaining children for a year for language reasons "strikes them out" by "making them feel different." She explained the impact like this: "and now you're having this one [student] that had been retained bullying the other kids. [...] There are detentions followed by fights, bullying, and, unfortunately, a potential dropout."

Language may also represent a formidable access barrier to education when parents cannot fill out paperwork required to enroll children in school. When parents did not speak English, could not be reached by phone, or did not communicate with the school for other reasons, migrant educators often acted as communicative liaisons between parents and the school (see also Free & Konecnik, in preparation).

6.1.2. Knowledge, attitudes and involvement with school

Many study participants felt that parents' knowledge about the school system, students' and parents' attitudes towards teachers and school, parents' level of involvement in their children's education, and their types of interactions with school resulted in difficulties for migrant students. A few study participants mentioned that parents do not show their children that they are interested in their learning processes and outcomes, for instance when students make the honor roll; this finding is very much related to the Cardenas' (1977) argument about poverty; however, a few other educators stated that parents did care deeply about their children's education and social mobility, and that they embrace aspirations for their children other than "work[ing] in the sun" ('Jen').

First, in terms of knowledge and attitudes, several study participants thought that students may not possess the type of knowledge of the professional world and the world in general that would open their imagination to professional career aspirations because the only work environment they are familiar with is the fields. Students may have little sense of self-worth and may not believe or know that they can achieve a different professional path, according to several study participants. They may have no idea what a College or University is and may not see it as a possibility given their family background and income. When asked how he would compare migrant students to non-migrant students, 'Steve' responded by saying that migrant students do not get the opportunity to go on adventures with their parents, or simply on an outing: "they don't get to go to a Disney World. They don't get to travel and go see monuments or different historical sites. The kids are stuck at home."

Second, with regard to parental involvement, several study participants stated that "the lack of help from the parents" ('Penny') was a major challenge for students and educators. In

addition, educators depicted as challenging students' and parents' attitudes and behaviors towards teachers and the school system, which they often related to cultural habits and lack of time resulting from parents' long work hours; especially, students' and parents' level of knowledge about and skills in effectively communicating with and intervening in the school system on children's behalf was perceived as a challenge. 'Jen' told us how parents' lack of knowledge about how to effectively interact with the school system, coupled with their lack of ability to do so because of time constraints, adversely affects migrant students: she recounted the story of a boy in middle-school who got a longer suspension than she felt was necessary—10 instead of 5 days-- because the school was unable to contact his parents: they had not updated their phone number, could not be reached, and thus could not come to school to talk to teachers after an incident with the boy. She summed up the educational consequences: “here we have a kid who's doing nothing, and that could have been solved with one phone call.”

Third, educators thought that students' and parents' attitudes towards teachers led to challenges. They tended to describe students and parents as “respectful,” “shy,” “timid,” and “humble” and discussed these attitudes' upsides—they facilitate a positive learning environment in the classroom—and the downsides: migrant students do not voice their concerns and do not ask questions; and parents do not know the important role that parents play in the U.S. school system and they hold teachers in very high esteem, and do not feel entitled to or consider it their role to challenge educators' or the school system's decisions about their child, even when these decisions may not be in their child's educational interest (at least in the eyes of the study participants).

Students also do not intervene in the system on their own behalf, for instance by communicating with teachers about problems they may have in class or about how to improve

their grades—as Lareau (2002; 2003) suggests, these students tend to be deferential and feel constrained. In addition, they may not know how or may not feel empowered enough to make an appointment with a school counselor. ‘Mike’ said that students easily give up when they cannot find an immediate solution to a problem. Asked how this affects their academic performance, he responded: “it affects them in a way where if they don’t open their mouths and they don’t speak to anybody, they just flunk.” ‘Allie’ thought that students’ timidity is a “setback” for them – she felt that they do not ask questions because they are very shy, and they tend to internalize their problems and then act out as a result. Similarly, ‘Mike’ said that as a result of not being able to access help, students may get aggravated and violent, depressed, and stop coming to school. However, on the plus side, there is also ample evidence that migrant teacher advocates do provide salient educational, logistical, and emotional support to migrant students (see Free & Konecnik, in preparation). Several migrant educators explained how they intervened with teachers on behalf of students because students and parents do not feel entitled or empowered enough to do so.

6.2. Family and care-related hardships

Frequently, educators drew a direct causal link between migrant workers’ wage exploitation and their children’s learning processes and outcomes: as migrant workers earn low wages, they need to work long hours (and weekends) to make ends meet. The long work days and weeks mean that parents have less time and energy to expend on their children’s educational and enrichment activities versus parents who work in 9-5 jobs that pay a decent wage. Parents’ time and energy-deficit, as a result of their working conditions, may have the following adverse educational consequences for children: young children may stay up late waiting for a parent to return from work and are then tired in school; children get up early during weekends to follow

their parents working on the farms, sometimes working themselves (as we discuss in section 4.3.2.); parents do not have the time and energy to communicate with children about what happened at school, inquire with teachers about their child's progress, participate in school activities, and volunteer at school and help children do their homework or homework-related activities. 'Eric' put it like this: "[migrant students] struggle with homework because they can't go home and have mom or dad help them because mom and dad [...] work in the fields and get home late at night. And they have to cook dinner and bathe the kids. So it's hard."

Often, many educators told us, migrant students shoulder significant caregiver responsibilities in the family: older siblings take care of younger siblings. This, in turn, means that they can spend less time on their own school work or they may even be absent from school to take care of younger siblings, as two study participants mentioned. Three educators of young migrant students mentioned that children may not have breakfast as a result of parents having to leave the house very early. A few study participants referred to the children of migrant workers as "latch-key kids" because they stay home by themselves while their parents are at work.

Several study participants also mentioned other family issues that may affect migrant students' learning and behavior at school, including parental divorce and separation (sometimes as a result of deportation or one parent moving for work reasons), substance abuse, and family violence. They felt that these issues adversely affected students' focus and led them to act out towards teachers or other students. On the positive side of the ledger, a few study participants also mentioned the support for children that they see in extended families, and the support for families by their immediate community; for instance when community members chip in for Quinceañera parties or for funerals. As Kim expressed it, "the migrant families do tend to take care of each other."

6.3. Material needs

Study participants provided overwhelming evidence that material needs adversely affect migrant students' learning processes and outcomes. The term "material needs" here refers to poverty (as a result of low wages) and a lack of such resources as food, adequate housing, and safe neighborhoods, consumer goods, especially uniforms, clothing and shoes, school supplies, funds for participation in school activities and events, and transportation. Material needs negatively affect children at the practical, emotional, and physical levels, which may adversely impact their learning. Perhaps the most insidious way that material need affects migrant children is at the emotional level: as a result of feelings of deprivation, low self-esteem, and "not belonging," children may act out and engage in deviant and delinquent behaviors that put them at risk, such as engaging in substance abuse, working in prostitution, and joining gangs—behaviors that are clearly not conducive to educational success and social mobility.

6.3.1. Low wages and poverty

Almost all study participants discussed the devastating role that poverty plays in the lives of their students. The educators interviewed spoke of the short-term (daily) and the long-term effects of migrant workers' inadequate income on their children's education. 'Sarah,' explained: "if anything I want you or anyone who is interested in the migrant child to understand that the impact [of poverty and mobility] is a long lasting impact. And sometimes it's not a nice impact. It's a negative impact [...] because you are poor." Study participants stated that migrant families struggle because they do not have enough money for basic necessities, including food, clothing, and adequate housing. 'Kim' explained why by saying, "they don't get minimum wage. They get below minimum wage. I know the minimum wage was \$7.75, and some of them I know [...]"

it's \$5 or \$6. A family will make about 14 or 15 thousand dollars yearly. For a family of 4 or 5, you will never see a migrant family making 20 and up. Never.”

Many of the educators interviewed felt that living in poverty negatively affects their students' daily lives at school because they do not have the necessary school uniforms and supplies and often they cannot participate in school related activities because they cannot afford to. 'Kathy' explained why migrant students cannot afford additional programs at school:

A lot of our kids are real good students but the minute they are required, because a lot of the different programs at the school, they require so much, they require not only parent involvement but they require a lot of money and some of our parents can't afford it, so the kids would rather not get involved in it. So they pretend they don't care because my mom's not going to have enough money for me to pay for that. Why am I going to enroll in that?

6.3.2. Children as additional labor

Migrant students' education can also be adversely affected by children serving as an additional labor force in a household: educators mentioned two types of work that migrant students take on – working alongside their parents in the field (as underage child laborers), and working in a part-time job, often instead of attending school, because they feel pressure (often from their parents) to do so. 'Jen' felt it was “heartbreaking” to hear students say that they're working in the fields after school: “and then they get up and come to school. [...] They're not going to bed; they're not reading a book; they're not playing on the Internet. [...] They're out working in the field to help the family. And then they're going to bed. Imagine their back, everything about it; it's hard work.” Other educators reported their students as young as eight or nine years old working in the fields alongside their parents over the weekend. 'Sarah' said that she asked her 14 kindergarteners how many of them worked in the fields – only 2-3 of them raised their hands. But, when she asked them if they go to the fields with their parents over the

weekend, all of her students raised their hands saying that they “help carry the bucket”- suggesting they are working. ‘Sarah’ also explained that instead of summer enrichment activities migrant students as young as ten years old work in the fields to “help pay the bills and all that. [...] So you don’t have a summer to go and do whatever you want. Your summers are going to go and to go help.” Other educators also spoke of children of legal working age being pressured by their parents to work instead of attend school. According to ‘Steve,’ migrant students “are forced instead to work. They are pushed to make an income for the family because that’s the way they are going to survive.” He added that students may drop out of school as a result of trying to help their families earn an additional income.

6.3.3. Food, clothing and housing

Many study participants discussed how children’s lack of basic necessities—food, adequate clothing, and housing—adversely affects migrant students’ education. ‘John’s’ statement highlights the problem of hunger: “if school is not [in], they can’t get free breakfast and free lunch, they are going to get one meal a day – whatever is at home. And if all the crops were bad, like we had one bad year, they weren’t eating.” According to study participants, migrant families’ meager income often does not provide enough to fulfill the basic human needs of food, clothing and shelter. ‘Andy’s’ rhetorical question casts light on the negative impact of hunger on students’ learning: “can you really do work when you’re worried about where you’re going to eat?”

Poverty may also affect how teachers view migrant students, and how students view themselves when migrant families experience difficulties providing adequate clothing and shoes for their children. For instance, ‘Kathy’ stated, “And a lot of the poverty comes when they don’t

have the proper shoes and sometimes not a lot of our teachers are understanding. And it's not negligence, it's just the money is not there." 'John' explained that migrant students might feel inferior to other children because other students tell them things like, "Your shoes are ugly. Your clothes are bad. You smell funny. You've got lice in your hair. You need to clean up. You look like a pig."

Study participants also frequently discussed housing as a hardship for the migrants. The educators reported students feeling insecure about where they will live next, feeling embarrassed about their homes, and experiencing difficulties sleeping due to tight living quarters. This is what 'Kathy' said about the negative educational impact of cramped living quarters, "you go to your home and you don't have the space to study." Migrant students may also be exposed to a wide range of issues on the camps where many live, such as violence, gangs, drugs, alcohol, prostitution, vandalism, and graffiti. Educators reported stories of drive-by shootings on the migrant camps when children were outside playing before dinner. 'Jane' said, "they do see violence. I had a student that said, 'Oh Miss, we buried by cousin today. She was 15. And you can see where the stab marks were. [...]' Here you see it everywhere, everywhere."

Migrant families also have trouble paying the bills for necessities, such as electricity and water. Educators reflected on what it means for students not to have the lights on or a place to study; they thought these were additional barriers that can negatively affect students' grades. Some advocates, like 'Penny,' told stories of children coming into class and saying, "My mommy didn't have lights today." 'Kim' considered what not having electricity means for children's education, "if they cut their electricity, how are they going to do their work?" If a migrant student does not have a uniform and cannot get one, the student may be sent to the principal's office or risk detention or being sent home – for repeat offenses a student can be

suspended. Thus, the student is missing out on learning valuable information from the teacher and time with fellow students in class – due to a lack of money to purchase the proper clothing required for school.

6.3.4. Health

Many study participants mentioned children’s physical and health related issues, especially lack of sleep, dental and vision problems, and speech issues, in addition to parents’ terrible working conditions (and children’s exposure to the same conditions when they work alongside their parents). For instance, in addition to these issues themselves, the educators also noted that parents had difficulty getting children to appointments, following up on directions from doctors, and being able to navigate the medical system due to language and educational barriers. ‘Amy,’ a pre-school educator, said she often has to “play doctor too,” “because when there’s issues I keep a chart and so I stay on top of them. When the parent comes after a couple of weeks, I say have you made that appointment yet at the eye doctor?” She (and other educators) also discussed students’ dental problems and shared a story of a four year-old boy having “every single tooth pulled” due to rotten teeth from sleeping with the baby bottle in his mouth. ‘Heidi’ explained how speech problems affect migrant students’ classroom behavior: “they get frustrated because they can’t communicate. [...] And sometimes that leads to behavior problems.”

Aside from these physical health issues, ‘John’ mentioned that migrant children who work in the fields or who accompany their parents to the fields (either to “help” or because they have no one at home) are exposed to additional health concerns such as pesticides, extreme heat, and poisonous snakes. Not only are these conditions hard on migrant students physically, but

they can add to their academic struggles by causing exhaustion and an inability to focus while in the classroom.

According to several study participants, migrant students also face psychological issues, such as intense low self-esteem, shame, stress, and even intense trauma, as a result of being different. ‘Sarah’ viewed these as the causes: “starting school late, having to be at school early, trying to fit in, knowing that they are different.” Other educators also supported the notion that migrant students experience a great deal of stress in their lives. ‘Rob’ also felt that “it’s tough for [migrant students]. They have the stress of always moving around, never knowing where they are going to be within the year [...] and you can see that with the way they interact with each other and the way their grades are affected.”

6.3.5. Transportation

Another hardship that may adversely affect migrant students’ education is migrant families’ lack of transportation: migrant families may not own a vehicle to take children to school or attend meetings at school. ‘Amy’ simply said, “well, when there is no transportation, they are not brought to school.” She also told the story of a student whose parents could not get to school for Thanksgiving lunch, saying, “and [when] they’re the only one that does not have a family member there, they cry. It does affect them. They’re aware of it.”

6.4. Educational challenges

Educational challenges are hardships that relate to students’ educational experience. These include challenges as a result of migrant families’ migratory experience, students’ lack of school supplies, lack of computer and Internet access, and teacher knowledge, attitudes, and stereotyping of migrant students—a finding that echoes Cardenas and Cardenas’ (1977) argument regarding the incompatibility between schools and minority students.

6.4.1. Migratory experience

Many educators mentioned that the migrant lifestyle, especially the transitory nature of migrant families' lives and the truncated school year for students, represents a serious educational hardship for migrant students; they also noted how it may negatively affect students' education and their peer relationships. 'Allie,' who explained that many students at her school are gone 20% to 30% of the school year, get to school late and leave school early, discussed the effects of migratory lifestyle, "so not only are [migrant students] behind academically, but school has already started and everyone has already made their friends. [...] And they are behind socially [...] and then at the end of the school year, come April, May, they leave. So they never finish out the school year." On a very practical level, students who move from school to school face the added challenge of proper record keeping and tracking of school credits and transcripts. Without proper or updated records, 'Andy' and 'Steve' explained, some students may not be placed in the right grade in school because of "the movement from here to there," resulting in students falling behind or having covered the material previously. This can lead students to become overwhelmed and give up, or, alternatively, feel bored and disengage from the learning process. A few educators spoke of the difficulty that migrating poses to students who are required to take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)³ because they miss out on testing. 'Mike' explained the seriousness of this issue: "in 'Sunshine County,' the FCAT has played a big role. If the student leaves without having taken the FCAT, the student will be detained a year."

6.4.2. Lack of school supplies and computer and Internet access

³ The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test is Florida's standardized exam (Florida Department of Education, <http://fcats.fldoe.org/fcats/>).

Another educational hardship study participants discussed was migrant students' lack of school supplies, such as pens, paper, book bags, textbooks, and school uniforms. 'Anthony' provided an example of a student who was failing science until she admitted that her family did not have enough money to buy the textbook. According to 'Kim' and 'Sarah,' the MEP also provides some supplies when funding is available and when private donations become available – including from the educators themselves: some study participants mentioned that they have bought supplies and shoes for students out of pocket.

Several educators explained that many schools now require uniforms. 'Amy' explained that in some ways this is better for migrant students because they do not have to worry about wearing the designer jeans and t-shirts as other kids. However, as she and other educators also noted, the uniform requirement also makes matters worse for migrant students because they are often mandatory some of the migrant families cannot afford them. As 'Jane' described, "If a migrant child does not have a uniform and cannot get one, it can result in them being sent to the principal's office, a detention, or being sent home – for repeat offenders a student can be suspended. This means the student is missing out on learning valuable information from the teacher and time with fellow students in class – due to a lack of money to purchase the proper clothing required for school." When students are sent to the principal's office for this violation, and parents cannot pick them up due to work, "they sit in my office until it's time to go or until I am able to contact somebody to bring them regular shoes or their bottoms or something" ('Jane'). Migrant students may be socially ostracized, disciplined for their families' poverty, and may miss out on important classroom material and learning experiences, only exacerbating their academic struggles.

An additional serious educational challenge facing migrant students is lack of computer and Internet access because migrant families cannot afford them. ‘Kim’ said, “students have to do their work on the computer; they have to type it,” and, she continued to say that “it is rare when you find a family that has access to internet or computer.” However, several educators mentioned that the MEP helps by providing computer and Internet access to migrant students at school.

6.4.3. Teachers’ knowledge and stereotyping

Advocates also described the lack of understanding and knowledge of the non-MEP teachers about migrant children, their culture, and their transitory lifestyle. Although educators did not mention outright discrimination or racist remarks, they did mention migrant students being negatively labeled and stereotyped. Study participants perceived this educational challenge to be the result of teachers’ lack of knowledge, understanding, and respect for migrants. The study participants acknowledged that some of the teachers *do* understand migrant students and act compassionately toward them – but others do not. ‘Jane’ shared: “I’ve gone in and been like, I understand there is a head lice case, but don’t single out the child that way because you’re going to make it even worse for them.” ‘Jen’ tried to explain: “I don’t think that the school system does enough to explain to these teachers what it is that these kids are going through or what it is these kids are doing [...] and a lot of people think that they are immigrants and that they’re here illegally. And it’s like, no, they are emigrants. ‘Migrant’ is not the same thing as an illegal immigrant.”

6.5. Legal status

Educators reported on several hardships that are related to parents' and/or children's undocumented legal status: increased poverty and food insecurity; family separation; fear, stress and trauma to students and their parents; problems in accessing education; and lowered aspirations among children who are undocumented. Entering the country without papers exacerbates a family's poverty because families may need to pay money to be smuggled into the country. In addition, undocumented families do not qualify for subsidized rental housing. Being undocumented also increases food insecurity because undocumented families are not eligible for food stamps. Parents' undocumented status may also lead to children's and parents' fears of deportation, to actual deportation, and/or to separation of one or both parents. Two educators mentioned that students' knowledge of their undocumented status dampens their aspirations. 'Cathy' pointed out that there are "students who're bright but they know they don't have a future because they're illegal so they start doing bad things because they aren't going to get anywhere."

Parents' undocumented status also creates access barriers to education when parents keep children from school, or when children are no longer eligible for the MEP. 'Eric' explained, "we have some parents who really like the program, and of course since some of the parents are illegal, they cannot be travelling from one state to the other one. So after three years we can't take the children." 'Olivia' recounted the story of "two little girls that weren't able to get into school because they [...] were undocumented, and they were staying at home for two years." She also recalled the case of another student who was a high school senior who could not start his school year for two months because his parents were deported and the student was not allowed to register for school. 'John' said that he puts particular effort into going into the community to recruit migrant students for the MEP because migrants "are all out in housing areas and they are all out in the streets and in the apartments. They do this because they're

hiding. Most of the ones that come here feel pretty safe. The other ones don't want to be picked up by INS or any local authorities so they are in hiding. You have to go out and find them.”

6.6. Consequences of hardships

To summarize, as Bourdieu's (1986), Cardenas and Cardenas' (1977), and Lareau's (2002) work suggested, we found that the hardships that migrant families experience are related to the characteristics of migrant students, especially their economic, cultural, and social capital, and the incompatibilities with the education system they are learning in. These hardships entail adverse emotional, physical, practical, and social and emotional consequences for migrant students, which can, in turn, negatively affect their education. Table 3, which presents these findings, shows that negative educational consequences for migrant students can result from physical and practical hardships, such as feeling hungry or distracted because of health issues, not being proficient in English, or not being able to do homework because the electricity has been shut off in the home. They can also be the result of emotional and social issues-- because migrant students become frustrated and de-motivated and experience low self-esteem because of the language barrier; because they lack constant peer support as a result of their transitory school experience; they experience stereotyping by teachers and feel “different” from other students because they do not have access to the same consumer goods (including clothing, shoes, and uniforms) and do not enjoy the living conditions and enrichment activities as children who do not live in poverty.

[Insert table 3 here.]

7. Discussion and conclusion

The main findings of this study support and extend previous scholarship on migrant students' hardships and the educational challenges faced by (undocumented) immigrant children and children living in poverty in general. Most pertinently, our study paralleled many of the findings of Cardenas and Cardenas (1977), who found incompatibilities between minority and poor students and schools because of poverty, culture, language, mobility, and the school's perceptions of students. Similar to previous research on migrant students (Bejarano and Valverde, 2012; Cobb-Clark, Sinning & Stillman, 2012; Collins, 2012; Embrey et al., 2001; Green, 2003; Holmes, 2013; Johnson, 1987), we found that the migrant students whose trials and tribulations that twenty educators employed with a MEP in Florida commented on experience numerous hardships; our study demonstrated that poverty, resulting from low parental income in particular, contributes significantly to migrant children's experience inside and outside of the classroom and adversely affects migrant children's learning and educational success.

Some of the educational barriers experienced by migrant students in Florida are similar to those of other children living in poverty in the United States (and elsewhere), including hunger due to lack of food, children's dental and other health problems, gang involvement, parental stress, lack of parental cultural capital, and transportation problems (Eaton, 2007; Kozol, 1992; Lareau, 2002). Lack of English language proficiency among children, and especially the kind of proficiency that would translate into educational mobility, is unique to first-generation immigrant children and the children of immigrants (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2010). Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (2009) have shown that first-generation immigrant students are respectful and motivated students, but they also face obstacles to education, including the trauma of immigration, poverty and prejudice, and immersion in a materialistic peer culture. Working-class children and children who live in poverty are less likely to be able to afford the consumer

goods that signal to children that they are full-fledged members of U.S. society. Sykes' (2011) and Pugh's (2009) studies have demonstrated how important cultural belonging through participation in U.S. consumer culture is to low-income parents and children. This theme also reverberates in this study, when educators reflected on the emotional effects of students wearing clothing and shoes that stigmatize them. This is important because these emotional effects can translate into negative consequences for education, as we have shown.

In addition, we identified the complex and intricate ways in which these hardships, especially poverty, affect migrant students' education in emotional, physical, practical, and social ways as a result of cultural and communication barriers, students' migratory experience, and their or their family's legal status. Our findings on students' fear of and worry about (parental) deportation and its adverse effects on children and young adults also echo other studies on immigrant children and families, especially Abrego (2011), Gonzales (2011), and Gonzales and Chavez (2012), which identified fear of deportation, stigma, and feelings of constriction as major adverse effects of undocumented legal status among undocumented Latino immigrants. We interpret these hardships and consequences as a result of the labor exploitation of migrant farmworkers, whose earnings are meager despite high work efforts, and who toil in difficult, unhealthy, and unsafe circumstances – paralleling recent research findings by Holmes (2013) – often alongside their children. We also find that the lack of language proficiency and material needs are also visible in the classroom, when students, who try to succeed and excel despite these barriers, then end up acting out in class or disconnecting from school altogether and start engaging in deviant behavior (substance abuse, prostitution, gang involvement, etc.) so they are not perceived as failures altogether.

Following Bourdieu's (1986) emphasis of the interrelatedness of economic, cultural, and social capital and the continuing incompatibilities between school and migrant students (as pointed out by Cardenas and Cardenas (1977)) despite the valiant efforts by migrant educators, we would like to conclude by emphasizing the saliency of continued and increased public support of this student population. If we wish to provide migrant students with a fair chance to develop to their full capacities, we argue that first and foremost a mandatory minimum wage requirement for migrant workers would need to be put in place (regardless of migrant workers' legal status) to provide migrant families with an income that allows them to make ends meet and their children to develop into fully-fledged members of U.S. society; in addition, at the policy level, immigration policy (especially detention and deportation of undocumented immigrants)—federal and state level legislation that affects immigrants' access to government services and public benefits (Earner, 2007)—needs to be changed to lighten the financial burden on low-income immigrant families, especially those who are undocumented.

In terms of the school environment, we recommend employing teachers (in addition to migrant teacher advocates) who themselves grew up as migrants or otherwise respect and understand the particular needs of migrant children; the latter could be accomplished by ways of mandatory cultural competency training focused on the experiences and needs of migrant students for migrant teacher advocates and all teachers, counselors, and social workers who will work with migrant children in schools. Further, any school serving migrant students needs a curriculum that is not only culturally sensitive to the specific needs and hardships of migrant children, but also relates to their lives as migrants. Research has shown that support groups for parents can have a positive effect on educational outcomes for migrant students (Lopez et al.,

2001). Additionally, school materials, forms, and rules/policies should be available in both English and Spanish for those families who do not speak fluent English.

This study is exploratory and limited because of its small sample size and focus on one site in Florida. In the future, more generalizable research analyses examining the process by which migrant students' hardships translate into the achievement gap between migrant and non-migrant students are necessary to test whether our exploratory findings are valid across the country and different populations of migrant students and educators. To conclude, we believe that major policy and research commitments are required if we want to avoid integrating migrant students into permanent poverty in the U.S. within the next 50 years.

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Tables

Table 1. Sample demographics (n = 20)

Demographics	N	Percentage
Gender		
Female	12	60%
Male	8	40%
Race/ethnicity		
African-American	1	5%
Latino/Latina/White Hispanic	15	75%
Caucasian	2	10%
Other	2	10%
Migrant status		
Self-identified as migrant	11	55%
Parents and/or grandparents were migrants	13	65%
Language		
Bilingual other than English-Spanish	17	85%
English as second language	7	35%
Nativity		
Native born (U.S.)	16	80%
Foreign born	4	20%
Occupation		
Certified teacher	9	45%
Teacher's aide/Paraprofessional	9	45%
Administrative/Clerical	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Table 2. Educators' perspectives on hardships faced by migrant students (total n=20)

Hardships	N	%
<i>Cultural barriers:</i>	19	95%
●Language & communication	19	95%
●Knowledge, attitudes & interactions with school	17	85%
<i>Family & care-related hardships:</i>	19	95%
●Parental absence & working conditions	14	70%
●Family structure	9	45%
●Children as caregivers	8	40%
●Family violence	5	25%
<i>Material needs:</i>	18	90%
●Low wages and poverty	18	90%
●Clothes, shoes	13	65%
●Health	11	55%
●Housing, electric/water, & neighborhood	8	40%
●Food, hunger, food stamps	7	35%
●Children as additional labor	5	25%
●Transportation	5	25%
<i>Educational challenges:</i>	17	85%
●Migratory experience	13	65%
●Lack of supplies (books, computer, Internet access) & access to school-activities	12	60%
●Teachers' knowledge & stereotyping	5	25%
●Early and long days	2	10%
<i>Legal status</i>	8	40%
Total	20	100%

Table 3. Consequences of the hardships faced by migrant students

Hardships	Consequences
<i>Cultural barriers</i>	<p><u>Students' level of understanding as a result of language barrier:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of comprehension of class material; frustration and attitude and behavior problems: students may feel low self-esteem, act out and/or disengage, fall behind in class and drop out of school. <p><u>Parents' inability to communicate with teachers and help with homework assignments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students fall behind academically. <p><u>Students' attitudes towards education and teachers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of intervention on behalf of themselves <p><u>Parents' attitudes towards education and teachers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of pro-active parental support of and intervention on behalf of students
<i>Family & care-related hardships</i>	<p><u>Parents' low income:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parents work long hours and weeks and are not available to support their children's school-related activities and help with homework. ➤ Children accompany parents to the fields and take on substantial caregiving roles for siblings: distracts from a focus on school.
<i>Material needs</i>	<p><u>Students' role as additional labor force in the fields:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students' lack of focus on school and potential school drop-out among older children <p><u>Lack of access to electricity, food, health and housing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students are unable to focus on school work. <p><u>Lack of transportation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of access to school: increased absences <p><u>Lack of clothing, shoes, etc.:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Low self-esteem and/or behavior problems and delinquent behavior
<i>Educational challenges</i>	<p><u>Migratory experience:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Practical problems with school records; inconsistent curriculum and testing history; lack of a constant peer group (and thus peer support) in school: low self-esteem, shame and stress as result of feeling "different" <p><u>Early and long days:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students get up early and stay up late to wait for parents to get home from work: sleep deprivation distracts from school work. <p><u>Lack of school supplies, computers and access to enrichment activities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students fall behind in computer literacy & knowledge acquisition in general; cannot interact with peer group as other students: experience low self-esteem, pretend not to care, disengage and/or act out. <p><u>Lack of school uniforms:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Possible detentions and suspensions <p><u>Teachers' lack of knowledge and stereotyping of migrant students:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Low self-esteem among students and disconnect from school
<i>Legal status</i>	<p><u>Undocumented legal status:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Emotional hardships (fear), educational barriers (parents do not enroll children in school) and material hardships