

# School Integration Among Canadian Newcomer Youth: Preliminary Results of an Arts-Based Ethnographic Study

Anusha Kassan, PhD, Nancy Arthur, PhD, Charis Falardeau, BA, and Suzanne Goopy, PhD

## Abstract

This arts-based ethnographic study centered on the phenomenon of school integration and investigate the following research questions: a) How do newcomer youth experience school? and b) How do these experiences influence their positive integration into the school system? Participants included newcomer youth who were in their first years of university in Canada. Their experiences were elicited through a) cultural probes and associated individual qualitative interviews, and b) focus groups. Preliminary results include the following significant themes: socio-cultural discourses related to migration; identity negotiation; health and well being; relationships; educational, occupational, and financial transitions; as well as future plans in Canada.

## Arts-Based Ethnographic Research Design



- Given to participants to document their experiences of the phenomenon of interest (in this case migration)

Cultural Probes

One Individual  
Qualitative  
Interview

- Content of cultural probes (which become artifacts) are used to guide qualitative interview

- Centered around the significant themes derived from qualitative interviews

Three Planned  
Discussion Groups

Goopy & Kassan (in press)

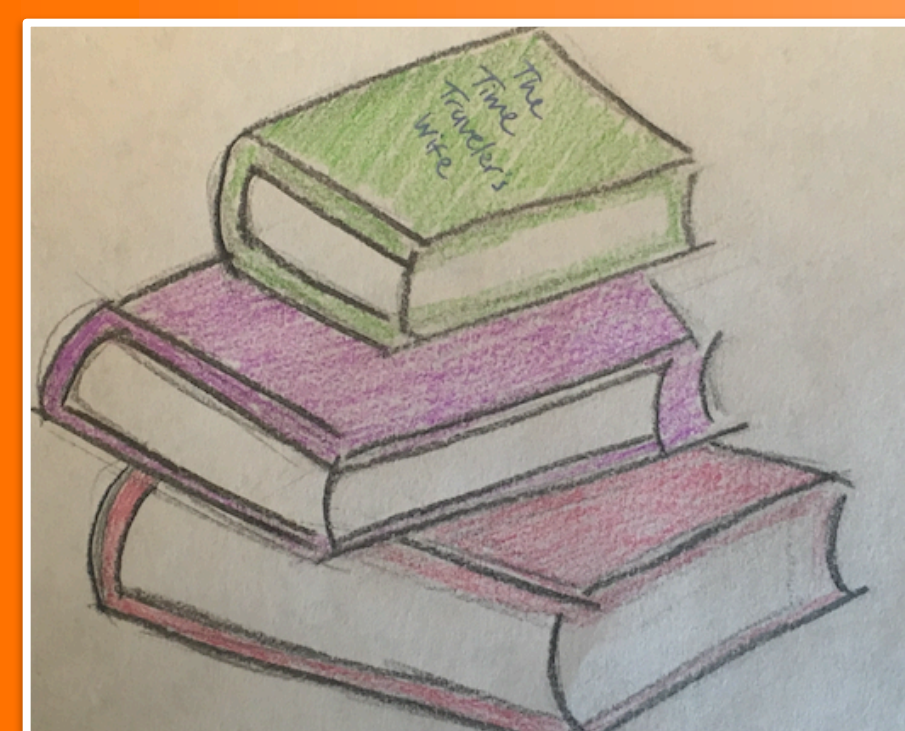


## Migration and School Integration

- The 21st century has been identified as the age of migration (Castle, 2003), with a marked increase in immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers across the globe (Arthur, 2013). Youth are currently the fastest growing group of newcomers in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012).
- School integration represents a new point of entry to study migration among newcomer youth.
- Defined broadly, this phenomenon captures the adjustment of newcomer youth across all aspects of student life – both inside and outside the school context, including English Language Learning, academic performance, classroom behaviour, social networking, involvement in school life and extracurricular activities, community engagement, emotional and familial well-being, as well as understanding of the educational system (Kassan & Gallucci, 2016).
- This study addressed the following research questions:
  - How do newcomer youth experience school?
  - How do these experiences influence their positive integration into the school system?
- This study employed a social Justice framework (Stewart, 2014) and an arts-based ethnographic research design (Goopy & Kassan, in press).

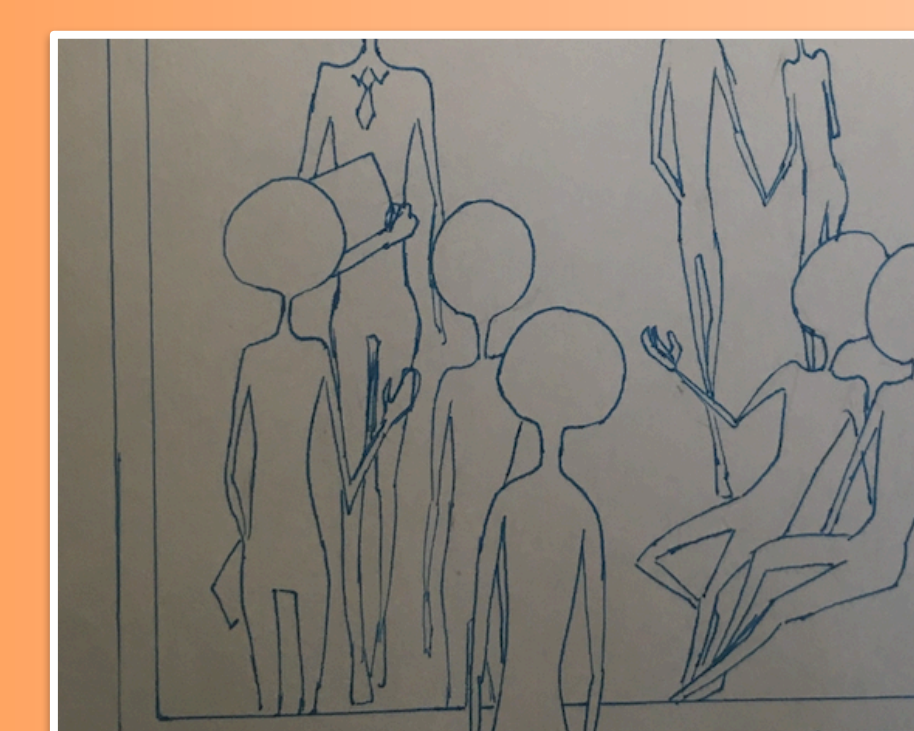
## Preliminary Results

### General School Culture



- Diversity within school
- Learning English in school
- Teachers and support

### Trying to Fit in



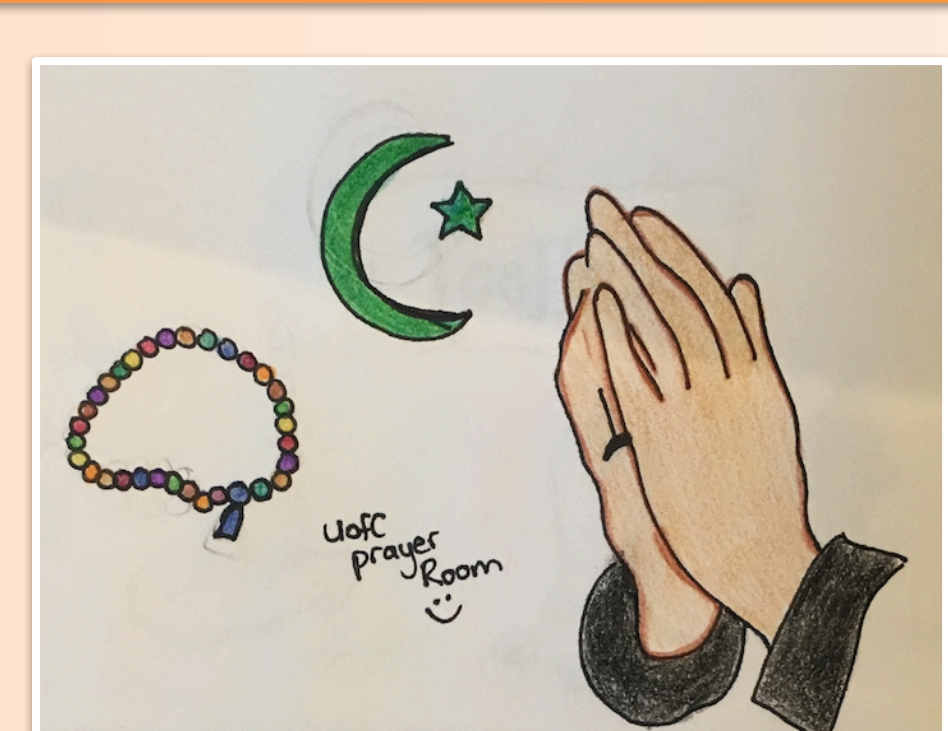
- Exclusion
- Inclusion
- Impact on mental health and wellbeing

### Family Expectations



- Academic expectations
- Cultural and religious expectations
- Negotiating parent expectations

### Growing Self-Identity



- Bridging multicultural identity
- Personal agency
- Seeking cultural experiences

## Participants

N	10
Gender	9 Females and 1 Male
Age	18 - 20 years old
Race	Asian (7), African (2), Latina (1)
Country of origin	India (2), Philippines (2), Nigeria (2), England (1), Mexico (1), Pakistan (1), South Korea
Religion	Christian (6), Hindu (2), Islam (2)
Time in Canada	Between 4 and 15 years
Major	Psychology (5), Accounting (2), Biology (1), English (1), Kinesiology

## References

- Arthur, N. (2013). International students and career development: Human capital in the global skills race. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*, 31, 43-50.
- Castles, S. (2003). *The age of migration* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2012). *Facts and figures, 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/menu-fact.asp>.
- Goopy, S., & Kassan, A. (in press). Arts-based engagement ethnography: An approach for making research engaging and knowledge transferable when working with harder-to-reach communities. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.
- Kassan, A., & Gallucci, A. (2016, August). *School integration among newcomer youth: Learning from the experiences of high school students*. Paper presented at the Partner Research Schools Conference 2016. Calgary, AB.
- Stewart, J. (2014). The school counsellor's role in promoting social justice for refugee and immigrant children. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy / Revue canadienne de counseling et de psychothérapie*, 48(3). Retrieved from <http://cjc-rc.calgary.ca/cjc/index.php/rcc/article/view/2722>

**Contact Information** – Anusha Kassan, PhD – [anusha.kassan@ucalgary.ca](mailto:anusha.kassan@ucalgary.ca)  
**Funding** – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council – Insight Development Grant # 430-2017-00184