



ABSTRACT WORKING PAPER 3.22

LENGTH OF THE STAY IN THE HOST COUNTRY AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF IMMIGRANT STUDENTS: THE ITALIAN CASE

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Using Italian data on standardized test on Language for different levels of schooling we investigate 1) if the observed gap in educational attainments in first generation immigrants tends to lower the longer their stay in Italy and 2) if younger children reduce the gap faster than their older classmates. Results confirm the presence of a significant gap between natives and immigrants students in school outcomes for all grades, with first generation immigrants showing the largest gap. Second, comparing the results between first and second generation immigrant students they also suggest that the significant gap observed on first generation is mainly due to the negative performance of newly arrived immigrant children in Italy. That is, for first generation students, closing the gap with second generation ones seems to be, for the most part, a matter of time. However, the gap between natives and immigrants remains significant in all grades. Finally, when we compare the results across the different grades, it turns out that interventions at younger ages are likely to be more effective. This result suggests that the possible benefit of policies that delay immigrant family reunification need to be compared against the costs of students' remedial assistance.