

The 1.5 Generation Script
Mariann Guzman-Espinoza
Instructor: Christopher Dean

Pull Quote: "Although these memories of Mexico are few and fleeting, I thank my parents for taking so many pictures of me as a child in Mexico even though there were some changes in my identity through the years, especially when I was younger from elementary school to high school, when at times I was the only Mexican or Latina in my class... The pictures that I hold help shape me and remind me of my roots and have allowed me to say with confidence that I am a 1.5 generation Mexican-American."

Mariann: Hello, my name is Mariann Guzman-Espinoza here on UCSB's premier news station GauchoNews. As many of you know, the UCSB READS Book of 2019 was the graphic novel *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui. We recently held a contest asking students to make a short video on one of the themes of the book and how it relates to their own lives. Today, we are announcing the winner of this contest by broadcasting their winning video about the 1.5 generation of immigrants and their connection to it. So, let's take a look.

[Photo Slideshow of my Childhood Begins]

Mariann: According to the Pew Research Center, "'First generation' or 'foreign born' refers to people born outside of the United States to parents neither of whom was a U.S. citizen," while "'Second generation' refers to people born in the United States, with at least one first-generation (immigrant) parent." Growing up, I didn't know what generation to identify with, even though by this definition I was a first generation Mexican-American. It was hard for me to identify with the term "first-generation" when I don't even remember anything about my life back in Mexico. I would go back and forth with the two terms until I read an article in my Writing 2 class called "Gen 1.5: Where an immigrant generation fits in" by Leslie Berestein Rojas that detailed the unique story of the 1.5 generation, a word defined by her as "a term used to describe people who arrived in the U.S. as children and adolescents." This article completely captivated me, and I knew I wanted to write my piece on the 1.5 generation to not only learn about the term but also learn about myself, which includes learning about the lives my parents led in Mexico.

First, let me introduce myself: my name is Mariann Guzman-Espinoza, and I am part of the 1.5 generation of Mexican-Americans. I was born in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico in a city called Salina Cruz where I lived with my mother and my older sister until I was three years old. My dad worked in the United States as a street artist and would work two months straight, so that he could come back to visit us almost every two months and would stay with us for two weeks. Although it was expensive, my parents knew that maintaining a strong relationship and family bond with each other was very important. But even then, this was very hard on my parents, so when I was three years old my parents decided to move all of us to San Francisco, California, where I've until I came to UCSB for college.

I first wanted to narrow down my research to the specific state I'm from, as I've noticed it's rare for me to meet people who are also from Oaxaca. An article called "The Oaxaca-U.S. Connection and Remittances" by the Migration Policy Institute stated that, "Oaxacan migration

to the U.S. is a small percentage of the overall flow of Mexican migrants. The state ranked 16th among Mexican sending states according to INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística Geografía e Informática) estimates for the 2000 census." This helps explain why my family are the only ones in our entire extended family that moved to the US, as I can see even within my own family that a lot of my relatives live on the same street block with each other, never really moving out of the town unless to go to their spouse's hometown. As we were the only ones in the United States, that caused my family bond to really strengthen, because we were all we had in the United States, but also that caused a huge rift between my two identities. My parents wanted my sister and I to assimilate to American culture and speak English as fast as we could, so we wouldn't be made fun of, and without other relatives to talk to about Mexico or in Spanish, I quickly forgot I was even Mexican at times in elementary school.

As I want to learn more on my own personal identity, outside sources aren't enough when it comes to learning more about my family, so I interviewed my parents to ask them questions about their childhood, experiences with immigrating, and identity.

[Interview]

Listening to my parents' stories, at first I felt disconnected, as my childhood felt so vastly different. For starters, I only have two older siblings and am the youngest. I grew up in the city of San Francisco, a diverse and accepting community that encouraged self-expression and the pursuit of knowledge. I struggled much less learning English than my parents or my sister, as I never went to school in Mexico, so I started my formal education in English while my sister came to the US in time for fifth grade, causing her to stay in the ESL program all the way through high school. But there were also moments where I could relate. My family and I have traveled back to Mexico about five times since moving to the US, so I have experienced the festivals and met the people back in Mexico that my parents talk about so fondly in stories. I've played on the same streets my parents played in growing up and tried their favorite childhood snacks. Although these memories of Mexico are few and fleeting, I thank my parents for taking so many pictures of me as a child in Mexico. Even though there were some changes in my identity through the years, especially when I was younger from elementary school to high school, when at times I was the only Mexican or Latina in my class. Also, in early 2016, my dad told me to stop telling people I was born in Mexico, even though we were both US citizens, due to the fear he had from statements about Mexican immigration the current president has said. The pictures that I hold help shape me and remind me of my roots and have allowed me to say with confidence that I am a 1.5 generation Mexican-American.

[Mariann appears again]

Wow, that was very informative. Thank you all for tuning in and don't miss out on our highly publicized live debate tomorrow on which dining hall is better: Ortega or DLG? This is Mariann Guzman-Espinoza, signing out.

Works Cited

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Author Profile: I am a first-year biology major who hopes to one day become an emergency medicine physician. The idea for writing this piece came when I read "Gen 1.5: Where an Immigrant Generation Fits In" by Leslie Berestein Rojas in my Writing 2 class. This article really captivated me because it was a term that I could finally identify with as someone who was born in Mexico but immigrated to the US at a young age.