

## **Education rate jumps for Hispanic immigrants in U.S.**

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### **Body**

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The percentage of adult **Hispanic immigrants** with high school diplomas has doubled in the last 30 years, an indication that the **education** gap between such **immigrants** and native-born Americans is narrowing, according to a new study from the Pew **Hispanic** Center.

The Pew, a Washington-based arm of the University of Southern California, tabulated Census Bureau survey data of adults ages 25 and older from 1970 to 2000 to make its findings.

The study struck an optimistic note, emphasizing that the **educational** profiles of the **Hispanic** foreign-born are improving faster than those of native-born Americans of all ethnicities, although gaps remain, especially on college degrees.

B. Lindsay Lowell, Pew's research director and the study's primary author, said the data should counter claims made by some advocates of more immigration restrictions that the **education** level of the **Hispanic immigrant** population is falling behind that of the **U.S.-born**.

"In the coming decades, the **educational** composition of the Latino foreign-born population will begin to look more like that of the American native-born population," the report says.

The report concedes that much of the potential for "gap closing" reflects the stagnant growth in **education** levels among native-born Americans, about 90 percent of whom complete high school. With such high percentages, there is little room for improvement.

At the same time, **Hispanic immigrants** have seen the **rate** of high school completion double over the last 30 years, to 40 percent.

In counting college degrees, however, **Hispanic immigrants** lagged. While the share of **U.S.-born** students completing college increased over the last 30 years from 17 percent to 35 percent, the **Hispanic** foreign-born figure went from 9 percent to 17 percent.

Lowell said that although the college figures represented a "challenge," he said he expected a long-term narrowing of the gap in college statistics as well.

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That is because statistics for Hispanic immigrants are weighed down by the large numbers of older immigrants, who often have little education, he said. Education levels for Hispanic immigrants as a whole will improve as that older generation of immigrants dies off, the report says.

"Latino immigrants have done much better than is typically portrayed," Lowell said, "and it's likely they will continue to close the education gaps in the future."

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