CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the evening All over this land.

If I had a bell. . . .I'd ring it in the evening. . . .W ell, I got a hammer,

and I got a bell. . . .It's the hammer of Justice.

It's the bell of Freedom.

It's the song about love between my brothers and my sisters, all over this land.

If I Had a Hammer (The Hammer Song)

Words and music by Lee Hays and Pete Seeger, ©1958

Many Latinos have made the journey from their native countries arriving here with dreams of peace, social justice, equality, and freedom to pursue their educational dreams. This is a qualitative case study about the challenges that English language learners (ELLs) face in acquiring second language acquisition (SLA) skills in an urban Virginia high school that has witnessed an increase in Latino enrollment. This researcher sought to analyze the impact of policies, pedagogy, and practices on the educational experiences of 10 Latino English language learners (ELLs) by examining the policies of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) with the pedagogy that English as a Second Language (ESL)[1] and content area teachers use to enable Latino ELLs acquire proficiency in English and have relevant academic experiences in high school. This researcher also sought to understand how the confluence of educational policies impact the scope and practices of an academic curriculum for Latino ELLs in one ESL classroom as well as in content area classrooms along with English-speaking peers. The current framework of NCLB may thwart Latino ELLs progress toward achieving the American dream of educational equity and learning for all and may hinder teachers' abilities to create a space for discourse that is affirming and preparative for living productively in the 21st century.

The Latino Presence in the United States

The demographic profile of the United States is changing in a dramatic manner. The estimated Hispanic population as of July 2004 is 41.3 million, constituting 14% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). Mexicans comprise 64% of the Latino population with Puerto

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[1] In this study I use English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom as the term where English language learners (ELLs) study the second language as a subject. The person who teaches them will be referred to as the ESL teacher, or teacher of English language learners (ELLs).

Ricans at 10% and about 3 percent each of Cuban, Salvadorans and Dominicans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). The use of Spanish language continues to be a dominant factor in Latino communities where more than "31 million of U. S. residents age 5 and older speak Spanish at home" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005, p. 2) Included in that number are at least half of the 31 million who said they spoke English very well (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). The Hispanic/Latino population has dramatically increased in the regions of the South and the West. In the South, the population of Hispanic origin is 34.8%, as compared to 33.3% Non-Hispanic White. By the year 2050, it is projected that 50% of the population of the United States will be comprised of ethnic minorities, making the term "minorities" somewhat anachronistic (Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002).

Cultural Division

Some scholars see this increase in Latino population as a major division in the ethos of our cultural way of life and as a threat to the Anglo-Protestant values that built this nation. Huntington (2004) illustrated this position:

> The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures and two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U. S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves—from Los Angeles to Miami—and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American Dream. The United States ignores this challenge at its peril. (p. 30)

This peril as is seen by some, is compounded by the dramatic increase in the number of Hispanics (34.4%) who are under 18 years of age, as compared to 22.8% Non-Hispanic White (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). The percentage of younger-aged Latinos has implications for educational policies and practices affecting linguistically diverse children in the public schools of this nation. The number of English language learners (ELLs) nationwide grew to 4.7 million in the 2001-2002 school year, representing a 95% increase since 1991. The United States Department of Education indicated an increase in the number of ELLs to 5.5 million ELLs. (Paige, 2004). The Latino population of elementary and high school students stands at 18% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). The dropout rate of Hispanic youth accounts for a larger percentage than Black, non-Hispanic and white non-Hispanic. Fry (2003) reported that in 2000 the high school dropout rate was 21.1. Other figures put it as high as 40 percent (Child Trends, 2006)

Backlash Pedagogy

Backlash Pedagogy threatens the possibility of educational achievement and intellectual and social equity among students who lack linguistic skills. The term "Backlash" was coined in Faludi's (1992) book and was highlighted in the Women's Movement in the 1990s. It was used to demonstrate how the media manipulates women's issues and describes the philosophy of "blaming the victims" for their circumstances. Such sensationalism was viewed unquestionably by media experts and highlighted in reports that portrayed women in an unflattering light rooted in politics, products of ideological and institutional structures that legitimized and maintained privilege, access, and controls of the sociopolitical and economic terrain (Gutiérrez, Asato, Santos, & Gotanda, 2002).

Similarly, Gutiérrez et al. (2002) have appropriated the term "backlash pedagogy" as one that blames teachers and along with linguistically and culturally-diverse poor students for the educational crisis instead of examining the deep-rooted issues of social, political, and economic inequality as chief stumbling blocks to true educational reform. A fundamental characteristic of backlash pedagogy is that it does not harness diversity and differences as resources for learning, but rather regards them as problems to be eliminated or remediated. Backlash pedagogies prohibit the use of students' complete linguistic, sociocultural, and academic repertoires in the service of learning (Gutiérrez et al., 2002). A prime example of backlash pedagogy is Proposition 227 in California, which prohibits the use of a students' primary language in instruction. This law requires that schools ignore language differences by mandating a one size-fits-all approach to language and literacy learning in the form of English-only instruction (Gutiérrez et al., 2002).

The Latino Diaspora

A second factor affecting educational access and equity for ELLs is the movement of Latinos from major urban centers to other less populated regions in the country, including the Midwest, South, Northeast, and West (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002; Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002). In the 1990s, Latinos were migrating into these regions in significant numbers and particularly into the states of North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, Nevada, and Alabama. The greatest increase in Hispanic population occurred in North Carolina, with a 449% increase, adding to the overall Latino increase in all of the states of 222% (Huntington, 2004). This increase in Latino population in the Latino Diaspora is due primarily

to the availability of employment opportunities in low-status occupations, which are often intertwined with labor exploitation, housing discrimination, educational marginalization for children, and linguistic racism (Villenas, 2002). Educational policymakers are challenged to address the symptoms as well as the roots of the structural inequalities that prevent Latino children and families from achieving the ability to move ahead academically and economically (García & Wiese, 2002).

Virginia's Latino Diaspora

In comparing census data from 1990 with similar data for the year 2000, Virginia has moved from a 2.6% Hispanic population to 4.7% (Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002). Virginia indicated an 83.3% increase from 1990 to 2000 of 5- to 17-year olds who speak another language and do not speak English "very well" (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2002). The Commonwealth of Virginia reported that Limited English Proficient (LEP) student enrollment in the 2003-04 school year had increased by 162.9% compared to a 2.5% level for school years 1996-1997 (U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2004).

In Virginia, 97.2% of the programs of instruction for English language learners do not incorporate the native language. Only 2.8% of the instructional programs use the native language (Kindler, 2002). In the Commonwealth of Virginia, there were 1,891 teachers certified in English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction. However, only 754 teachers were assigned to LEP students in the 2000-2001 academic year (Kindler, 2002). This represented a 50:1 ratio of teachers to students.

In the following section I describe the Latino Diaspora in the area where the study was conducted. I have used pseudonyms for the geographic area, city, school division, high school, and faculty members. Pseudonyms have also been used for the participants in order to protect their privacy.

Green Valley's Diaspora

In Crimson City's school division, the number of students requiring ELL services has increased from 123 students in 1996-97 to 353 in 2003, to 534 in September 2004, and to 704 in September 2005. The ELL staff has increased from 3.5 teachers in 1996-97 to 11 full-time teachers in 2002-2003, Tilley-Lubbs (2003), and to 18 teachers in September 2004. The school division has set an optimal pupil-teacher ratio of 30:1 and plans to add additional staff as

necessary. In the Green Valley, which includes several counties and cities, the Latino population has risen from 1,359 to 2,679 or 1.1% of the total population Tilley-Lubbs (2003). The growth of the Latino community is evident everywhere, from weekly services in Spanish in the First Spanish Baptist Church, and to weekly masses in Spanish at the Roman Catholic Church. There are sections of authentic Mexican foods in grocery stores such as Kroger and Food Lion. There are also 15 Mexican restaurants in the valley.

Challenges of the New Latino Diaspora

The movement of Latinos to nontraditional regions is often accompanied by challenges to their senses of identity, status, and community. Murillo and Villenas (1997) have named this phenomenon the New Latino Diaspora. The questions of identity are frequently addressed through formal and informal policies of mediating institutions such as the schools (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002). School districts throughout the states receiving the new immigrants often do not thoroughly explore educational research or other measures of accountability to create effective programs for ELLs (Beck & Allexsacht-Snider, 2001). Another problem is that school districts often have difficulty in staffing schools with appropriate personnel to teach ELLs. This is particularly true if they have initiated reforms without giving careful consideration to actions of hiring the least trained and experienced teachers with little or no experience teaching English language learners (Gutiérrez et al., 2002).

Assessment and Accountability Issues

A third issue that looms large in the question of educational equity for English language learners is the question of assessment and accountability according to the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). Abedi (2004) points to glaring issues regarding reporting of the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for students with limited English proficiency (LEP). The author points to inconsistent LEP classification, sparse LEP population in many states, and linguistic complexity of assessment tools. Abedi further indicates that there is a lack of subgroup stability because students are moved out of ESL classes once they become "proficient," and schools with a large number of LEP students with lower baselines require greater gains. Therefore, the NCLB Act (2001) mandates may unintentionally place undue pressure on schools with higher numbers of LEP students.

Accountability requirements and reporting mechanisms of the NCLB create pressures at all educational levels from the local school division to the state and federal government to

maintain assessment procedures indicating LEP student progress in English language proficiency (Abedi, 2004). A challenge for educators is how to balance the demands of the NCLB policy mandates of content standards and testing, with teaching practices that "can help teachers design multicultural curricula that foster intellectual engagement and democratic activism" (Sleeter, 2005, p. 22). Guilherme (2002) posits that ESL teachers see themselves as transformative educators, whose role is to help their students expand their visions about themselves and help them move towards educational and intellectual achievement.

Theoretical Framework

Schools as socializing institutions must create effective learning environments for students to be critical citizens for today and tomorrow's world (Faltis & Wolfe, 1999; Freire, 2000; Guilherme, 2001). For this research, I have drawn on three major educational theories and constructs that have an impact on the teaching and learning of English in an academic setting for Latino ELLs. The first is the Vygotskian (1978) principle that knowledge is socioculturally constructed. In order to have a rich environment for learning, language is inexorably influenced by the society and cultural context in that learning takes place. By providing a supportive environment with the guidance of mentors, or capable peers, the learner is able to move to higher levels of cognition and development through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Moll and Greenberg (1990), Gutiérrez and Rogoff (2003) similarly shed light on the behaviors of individuals that make meanings possible within the contextual framework of a community and a social milieu. It is a theory of human development that sees human societies and their individual members as mutually dependent on each other. Wells and Claxton (2002) stated: "in a profound sense, we are so wedded… to the tools we use that we cannot be understood apart from them" (p.3).

The second theoretical construct applied for this study is that of second language acquisition as proposed by Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model. This theory, which is discussed more fully in the literature review in chapter two, is framed around five hypotheses regarding language acquisition and language learning. This is important as I examine the classroom setting where learners can be in a comfortable environment, which is conducive to comprehensible input. A corollary to the second language acquisition theory proposed by Krashen is the conceptual framework for second language proficiency is that proposed by Cummins' (2000) theory of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), and Cognitive Academic Language

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Proficiency (CALP). This theory is important to academic language learning due to the distinction that is made between less demanding conversational skills (BICS), and the more demanding cognitive and analytical skills that are needed to function in an academic setting of a content area classroom, (CALP). An in depth review of this framework is presented in chapter two.

The third theoretical framework related to this research is founded on constructivism, critical and transformative pedagogy (Dewey, 1916; Cummins, 2000; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 2003), and on aspects of critical cultural awareness as elaborated by Guilherme (2002). A key principle of constructivism shared by all of the theorists is that knowledge is made rather than found, or co-constructed by the mind and reality. Critical pedagogy is fundamentally committed to the development of a culture of schooling that emancipates rather than subjugates marginalized and disenfranchised students. An essence of critical pedagogy is to create spaces and interactions between teachers and learners where instruction could go beyond the "sanitized curriculum that is still the norm in most schools" (Cummins, 2000, p. 260). Linked to those concepts of critical pedagogy is critical cultural awareness that aims at individual and collective emancipation and transformation for social justice and political commitment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to analyze the impact of the policies of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) on the teaching and learning of 10 Latino English language learners (ELLs) in an urban high school in Virginia. This researcher examines the nexus of the policy of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2001) with the pedagogy of the English as a Second Language (ESL) and content area teachers, and the practices employed by teachers to enable ELLs acquire a second language in an academic setting. The picture that emerges can inform stakeholders as to determine best policies, pedagogy and practices for educating Latino English language learners.

Research Questions

The overarching objective of this study is to examine the convergence of NCLB language policy with the nexus of pedagogical practices and the role of the ESL teacher. Cummins (2000) proposes that a transformative educator is one who is able to help students relate curriculum content to their individual experiences and analyze broader social issues relevant to their lives.

To this extent, I examined the application of pedagogical practices on Latino ELLs and their ability to acquire proficiency in the second language as well as participate in all English speaking academic content area classes. I observed and analyzed how educational policies of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) had an impact on the pedagogy and practices of ESL and content area teachers in one urban Virginia urban high school.

The research questions guiding the study were:

1. How does the NCLB law affect the teaching and learning environment of the English language learners' (ELL) classroom in one urban high school?
2. How do Latino ELLs acquire the academic knowledge and second language skills to succeed in regular classes with native English speakers?

Justification for the Study

The increasing number of Latino families moving into the Green Valley has implications on the schooling of immigrant and English language learners (ELLs). It converges on the socio-economic realities of new surroundings with the ideological issues of what is the true meaning of schooling, what purpose it serves, and how to mesh intellectual and socio-cultural development of individuals. For the Latino ELLs entering high schools with varying educational experiences from their native countries or other geographic locations, the limited time spent in the formal structure of the school day may well dictate their choices for access to higher education, career paths, and learning to live in a transformative society. The critical issues of policies, pedagogy, and practices frame this study to determine how Latino ELLs acquire the academic knowledge and second language skills to succeed with native English speakers in content area classes.

The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) holds the states accountable for student academic achievement and assessment via adequate yearly progress (AYP) reporting. The school division is accountable for reporting the adequate yearly progress of each subgroup category of students, including ELLs. Mid-sized urban school divisions, such as this one that has received an influx of second language learners are compelled to rethink the social, cultural, and educational contexts with which to address the issues of how best to teach English within a reasonably short time in order to comply with the policy mandates of the federal law. Concomitant with the requirement for greater assessment and accountability via standardized testing is the necessity of the school division to hire highly qualified teachers certified in English-as-a-Second-Language techniques

to accommodate the newcomers. The influx of students and the new policy has implications for recruitment and training of ESL teachers.

My Personal and Professional Journey

My own personal and professional journey has brought me to this geographic area, and it is through the eyes of a bilingual-bicultural Latina woman that I conducted this research. My interest in ELLs stems from my own childhood experiences in the public schools as a non-English speaker. I was born in the United States, but at an early age went to live in Cuba for a few years. Upon my return, I was placed in a monolingual English class for which little or no help was available from the teachers and administrators. At that time, there were no bilingual or ESL programs for learners like me. It was a "sink-or-swim" situation. A teacher in the third grade physically punished me in front of my peers by hitting me across my legs with a 36 inch ruler for not knowing the word "halt." Fortunately for me I came from a literate family in both English and Spanish. Even though English was spoken with a strong Spanish accent by my parents, their firm beliefs in the promises of education were never shaken by their own economic circumstances. However, the trauma of the early years never quite left my psyche, and unconsciously I believe it has framed my love and interest for making the educational experiences of ELLs more rewarding and affirming.

A second interest that shaped my life and my profession has been my abiding interest in justice and educational equity for the poor. I have chosen to work in inner cities in large school districts of New York, Philadelphia and Chicago in addition to a semi-urban area of Virginia.

New York

In New York, I worked as a high school business education and Spanish teacher. During my early years of teaching, the school in that I worked received a large influx of non-English speakers primarily from the Dominican Republic. It was there that I created the first bilingual typing course by working collaboratively with Spanish and English teachers to modify the typing curriculum to reach these students and give them new skills and tools to use in their new environment.

From there, I transferred to one of the poorest community school districts of New York City as assistant director of the federally sponsored Elementary and Secondary Education Act, (ESEA) 1965, Title I Programs. It is in that community, written and studied so eloquently by

Kozol (1995), that I learned first hand the educational needs of poor children and saw what it means for people to live in poverty, anxiety, and loneliness.

Philadelphia

With each step of my professional life, I moved into new and challenging territories, but always with my mind centered on the educational needs of poor children and second language learners. I left New York to become a National Urban Fellow at Yale University, and I held an internship with the Superintendent of the Philadelphia Public Schools. As a National Urban Fellow, I was assigned as a special assistant to the Superintendent. In this assignment I reached out to the Latino community and created the first bilingual weekly column called *Entre Col y Col,* [In between the cabbage: A colloquial Spanish saying] to appear in the Philadelphia Daily News, one of the two major newspapers in the city. I also created a radio program called, *Su Sistema Escolar*, [Your School System,] based on a model New York City program, which reached the Philadelphia Latino community and was heard even in neighboring New Jersey.

My Return to New York

I returned to New York to assume a position as director of the Bilingual Teacher Corps Program, a federally sponsored program for educating minorities to work in inner city schools. As director of this consortium of four school districts, the Center for Bilingual Education, and the City College of New York, I helped to develop the first bilingual teacher-training program to certify bilingual teachers to work in the elementary and middle schools. It was a great joy for me to advance the work of the academy, to put in place courses for preservice teachers, and to reach out to the communities through the parent participation program incorporated into the Teacher Corps design.

Another important step of my career in New York was my work as a teacher trainer in the Lora v. Board of Education (75 Civ. E. D. N. Y.) case in 1978, which was brought to achieve guidelines for non-discriminatory procedures in the identification, evaluation, and placement of emotionally handicapped children. In this case, I worked as a member of a consultant team that provided in-service training to all teachers in New York City to help reduce the overrepresentation of minorities in special education classes.

Chicago

My next career move took me to Chicago. As Director of Multilingual Education for second language learners representing 18 languages and cultures, I learned about the wide scale

immigration of persons from all over the world, such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Poland, Russia, Pakistan, as well as Spanish-speaking countries. I have drawn on my experiences with these communities to bring to light the policies, practices and pedagogies that pave the way for ELLs to pursue their educational dreams as we move into a 21st century of uncertainties and possibilities.

Virginia

Upon my return to Virginia, I worked as a Spanish language teacher in the high school of my home community of Gloucester, Virginia and taught Spanish at Christopher Newport University in Newport News. In Gloucester, I continued my interest in the fledgling Latino community and the increasing number of Latina women who came to work as seasonal workers in the fishing and crab industries. Many of these women come for as many as eight or nine months from their coastal cities in Mexico to perform the hard labor of picking crabmeat from shells. Through my church I organized volunteers to take them to ESL classes at the local middle school, and take them to the local free health clinic, when necessary, because they did not have health coverage. My goal, and that of my church volunteers, was to help them feel welcome in this community.

My Faith Journey

My firm belief in my faith and my faith community has brought me this geographic area of Virginia. As a member of the Hispanic Commission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond Virginia, I had the opportunity to visit Latino Diaspora communities throughout the southeastern and southwestern parts of Virginia. I have witnessed the burgeoning enclaves of Latino communities and have seen how school divisions are trying to accommodate the educational needs of ELLs. In Crimson City, I attended the Roman Catholic Church and attended their Spanish masses and participated in their parish activities. In the spring of 2002, I conducted a pilot ethnographic study of the Latino community of the Roman Catholic Church in Crimson City. Through that study and my involvement with the church community over these last few years, I have come to know members of the Latino community and to dialogue with them about their aspirations for themselves and their children.

My mentor and guide. My parents guided and accompanied me from the onset of my faith journey; however, the most influential person in my life as I matured was my *Tía-prima*, [aunt-cousin], Sister Isolina Ferré. Sister Isolina (1914-2000), from La Playa de Ponce in Ponce,

Puerto Rico, was affectionately known as the Mother Teresa of Puerto Rico, and the *Ángel de La Playa* [Angel from the beach]. Indeed, Sister's vision about education, cultural development, and empowerment in helping the poor to have a voice in creating their own future resonates with the philosophy of visitors including Mother Teresa, Paolo Freire, Rev. Ivan Illich, Rev. Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, and many others who came to visit her in the *Centros Sor Isolina Ferré* [Sister Isolina Centers] in La Playa. She espoused the values of *dignidad, respeto y cariño* [dignity, respect, and love] for all human beings. Throughout this paper, I will humbly use her words as guideposts to my own reflections in conducting this research. In 1999, Sister Isolina Ferré received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Clinton.

Definitions of Key Terms

Academic Language	A set of discourse practices within content area classes that students need to acquire in order to participate and succeed in school (Castro Feinberg, 2002).
Acculturation	The process of cultural change that occurs in response to extended firsthand contacts between two or more autonomous groups. Acculturation involves the adaptation of an individual's sociocultural, psychological and linguistic experiences resulting from contact with the host society and the result of transitions made from one culture to another (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998).
Additive acculturation	A process of incorporating new elements of a culture without losing one's own cultural identification (Wortham, Murillo, Jr., & Hamann, 2002).
Assimilation	A process whereby individuals of one society or ethnic group are incorporated or absorbed culturally into another. Cultural assimilation usually implies loss of identification with one's former group (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998).
Conscientizacăó, or conscientization	The concept created by Freire (1972) to help poor people assume responsibility to change their reality through education and literacy formation. His beliefs lead to the foundation of Critical Pedagogy as an educational theoretical construct (Freire, 2000).

Diaspora	A dispersion of people from their original homeland. The dispersal of newcomer Latinos to areas that have not traditionally been homes to Mexican-Americans and other Latinos. Communities and long-term resident of these areas have had little interaction with Latino newcomers (Wortham et al., 2000).
English Language Learner (ELLs)	Students who are in school and are proficient in a language other than English. The focus of the term is on learning English to succeed in school. This term is replacing the term Limited English Proficient (LEP), although it is some times used interchangeably (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998).
ESL	English as a Second Language represents an approach to teach English to English Language Learners (ELLs). Teachers who teach second language learners in a specialized instructional approach to teach English are called ESL or ELL teachers (TESOL, 1997).
LEP	Limited English Proficient. The term used for students who have insufficient proficiency in English. This term is the official designation of the U.S. federal government and is found in the documents of the NCLB Act (2001). "The term has precise meaning in federal and state education laws as well as court decisions" (Crawford, 2004, p. xxi).
Fossilization	The cessation of learning. Permanent plateaus that learners reach, resulting from no change in some of their speech (Gass, & Selinker, 2001).
Hispanic	An umbrella term used by the federal government to describe the demographic population of persons from Spanish-speaking countries, including Puerto Rico. Hispanics are a heterogeneous group of different ethnicities and races (Castro Feinberg, 2002).
Interlanguage	The learner's developing language knowledge that may have characteristics and input of the first language and used in the output of the second language (Gass, & Selinker, 2001).

Latino	The term that is commonly used by agencies, organizations and individuals who identify themselves as Spanish-speaking persons. In this paper I will refer to "Latinos" throughout the discourse and to "Hispanics" when referring to official government documents (Castro Feinberg, 2002).
L1	A person's first language, or native language.
L2	A person's second language. L2 usually refers to any language learning or use after the first one has been learned (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998).
Second Language Acquisition (SLA)	The learning of another language after the first language has been learned (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998).
Universal Grammar (UG)	A set of innate linguistic principles common to all languages and based on Chomsky's (1965) theory of language acquisition.
Xenophobia	Fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign (Merriam-Webster, 2002).
Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)	Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory regarding the capability and level of performance between the actual developmental level and the potential development level of learning, especially with support from interactions with a more advanced interlocutor as described in Shrum & Glisan, (2005).

Chapter One Summary

In this chapter, I have laid the foundation based on important keys regarding the education of ELLs in the current educational environment of one urban high school in the Green Valley. The policy of the NCLB Act (2001) drives the overarching concern of policymakers and stakeholders to comply with federal mandates based on assessment and accountability measures to determine "proficient levels" of student academic achievement. It filters down from the federal level to the state and local level.

The pedagogy is, in turn, driven by these legislative mandates. ESL teachers in the ESL classroom are examining their pedagogical practices to insure that robust learning takes place for the community of ELLs, while helping ELLs discover their linguistic and communicative abilities in the second language within the school environment. How well ELLs succeed in their quest to learn the second language and how much academic success they find in the school is

closely linked to the pedagogical practices of the ESL classroom and content area classrooms as well as the environment that is created for academic success to take place.

The impact of policies on the teaching and learning of ELLs is the primary concern in this research design. This study represents a desire to see that Latino ELLs have an equitable chance to be able to make choices about their lives and futures in a democratic society like ours that prides itself on justice and equality for all.
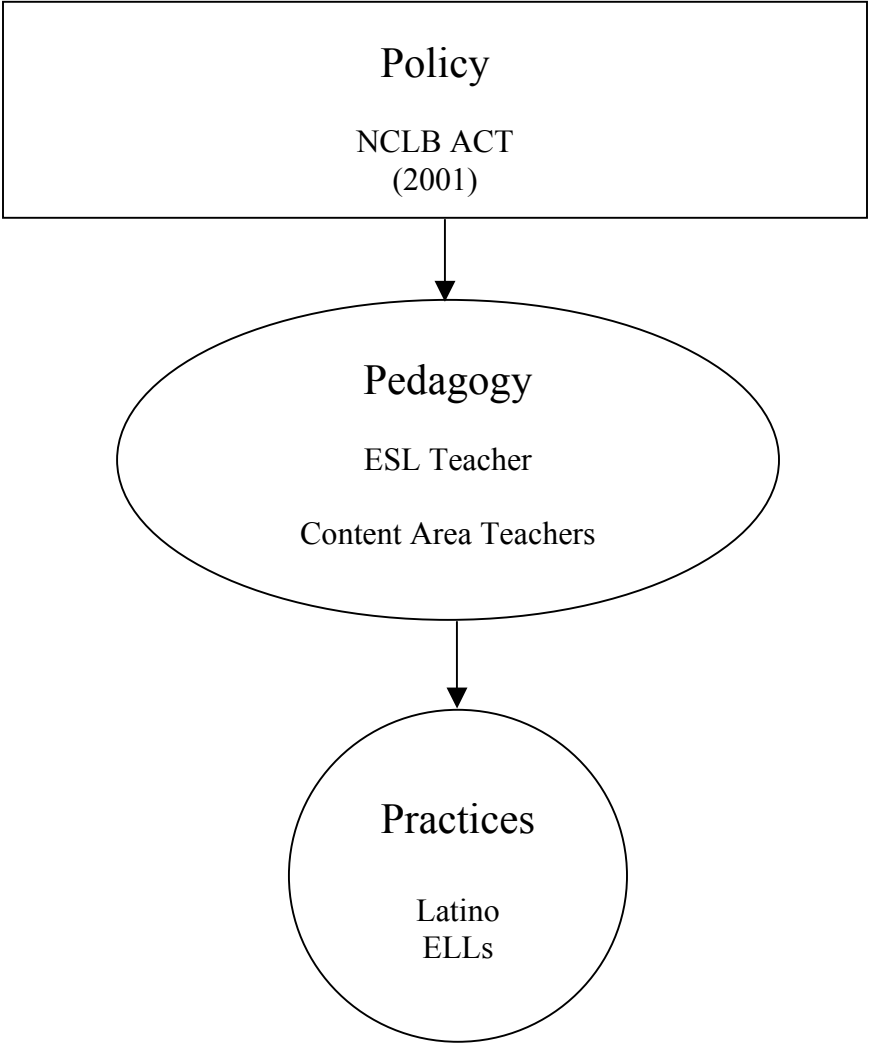
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Figure 1: Research Point of Entry and Focal Points

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Todos tenemos fuerzas interiores que sólo permanecen ocultas

hasta que encuentren la oportunidad de liberarse.

[We all have interior strengths that remain hidden until

one finds the opportunity to liberate them].

Sister Isolina Ferré (© 2001 García Santos)

In this chapter, I examine the literature regarding the policies, pedagogy, and practices that play a decisive role in the education of Latino English language learners (ELLs). In the policy arena, I examined the federal legislation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001), and the educational precedents leading to the implementation of NCLB; and legislative and policy actions that have affected the education of Latino ELLs in their quest for educational equity. In the pedagogy arena, I examined research regarding second language acquisition and critical pedagogy as a construct for learning. Following that I examined pedagogical strategies that support Latino's culture and language as tools for learning and affirming their identity. In the practices arena, I. examined the role of the associations and of the state of Virginia to provide guidance to educators and policymakers as to the best practices to teach Latino ELLs.

Policies

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB) Act (2001) P.L. 107-110

NCLB Act (2001) is the largest federal education reform legislation since the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) Act, (1965). It amends and reauthorizes the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA and consolidates previous educational laws enacted between 1965 and 2001 into one piece of legislation. This law sets a 12-year goal, beginning with the 2002 school year, for every student to perform at the *proficient* or *advanced* level in reading, mathematics, and science. The Act states the purpose of the legislation: "To close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind" (NCLB, 2001, p. 1). The policy change describes the four guiding principles of: (1) accountability, (2) flexibility and local control, (3) parental choice, (4) and what works for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and State Education Agencies (SEAs). President Bush signed the NCLB Act into law on January 8, 2002.

The federal government is imposing strict standards of accountability to close the achievement gap for students' performing poorly in schools. Schools will be held accountable for improving academic achievement. The federal government expects progress to be measured by annual reading and math assessments in grades 3-8. The states will be required to report progress through Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a term used to determine whether the schools and local education agencies (LEAs) are meeting state content performance standards. AYP is an individual state's measure of progress toward the goal of 100 percent of students achieving academic standards in at least reading/language arts and math. In Virginia, AYP measurable objectives for reading and language arts is to have at least 65% of students overall and students in each subgroup demonstrate proficiency on Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. In mathematics the AYP is 63% (VDOE, 2005)

The NCLB Act (2001) places special emphasis on educational programs and practices that are deemed effective through rigorous scientific research. One of the major challenges in attempting to understand this legislation is to determine what is meant by "rigorous scientific research." This term appears more than 100 times throughout the document (Crawford, 2002). There are also controversial positions embedded in the legislation. One example is the Title IX, General Provisions, stating that Districts receiving NCLB funds are required to provide Armed Forces recruiters the same access to high school students as college and job recruiters. Another controversial position is that it denies federal funds to any local district that discriminates or denies equal access to patriotic organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America (Crawford, 2002).

Summary of NCLB Act of 2001

To summarize the NCLB Act of 2001, the federal government has consolidated numerous educational programs into one major piece of legislation to eliminate duplication in paper work by submitting one application from the state level. The legislation addresses four key principles or pillars affecting curriculum design and implementation. These principles are: accountability, flexibility and local control, parental choice, and what works. The states and the school districts have a responsibility to carry out the mandates of the federal legislation. Parents have options for transferring their children to other public schools, charter schools, or alternative programs if their home districts are not making adequate yearly progress (AYP) or if their students are in schools that fail to meet state standards for at least two consecutive years. Of the

ten titles in this legislation, Title III, is the one that forms the cornerstone of my study, therefore, I have examined it in greater detail.

Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students

This Title assists school districts in teaching English to limited English proficient (LEP) students and in helping these students meet the same challenging state standards required of all students. The number of LEP students has grown dramatically from 2.1 million in 1991, to 3.7 million in 2000, and to 5.5 million in 2003 (Batalova, 2006). One of the key provisions of this program requires that teachers be certified as English language proficient. School districts are to certify that all teachers in a language-instruction education program are fluent in English and any other language used by the program, including written and oral communication skills. Language instruction curricula used to teach limited English proficient children are to be tied to scientifically based research and demonstrated to be effective. Title III provides discretion over instructional methods. Therefore, local school districts have the flexibility to choose the methods of instruction to teach ELLs. Parents have the right to choose among instructional programs if more than one type of program is offered. However, there is a marked emphasis on holding states and school districts accountable for ensuring that students become proficient in English within three years, and will be required to teach children in English after three consecutives years of being in school. Parents must be notified by the local education agency concerning why their child needs a specialized language instruction program (Crawford, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Title III replaces the former ESEA Title VII, The Bilingual Education Act. The Office of Bilingual Education (OBE) where the ESEA Title VII programs were located, was renamed as the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA); thereby, giving a subtle message that the goal of NCLB is transition to an all-English program. States with increasing numbers of LEP students and immigrant populations, such as Georgia and North Carolina, will gain more funding because NCLB replaces competitive grant funding with formula grants at the state level based on the number of LEP students in each state. The provisions of the Title III, consolidated thirteen bilingual and immigrant education programs into two new programs: (1) The State Education Agency (SEA) administered formula grants to support the instruction of LEP students, and (2) the federally administered competitive grants for professional development (Crawford, 2002). The U. S. Department of Education requires SEAs and LEAs to submit detailed plans for

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accountability and cooperation with other provisions of NCLB. It mandates assessments of English proficiency for LEP students each year and achievement testing in English for students that have been in schools in the United States for at least three years (Crawford, 2002). A feature of Title III is that it provides competitive grant awards of up to five years in consortia with SEAs and LEAs to train personnel working with the LEP students, including those seeking certification in the field. The funds may be used to upgrade the skills of paraprofessionals, to develop curricular for English learner programs and to provide scholarships for teachers in training (NABE, 2002).

Criticism Focuses on NCLB Act (2001)

A number of troubling issues prevail regarding the implementation of the NCLB. Notwithstanding the good intentions of the law to increase accountability measures and to equalize the playing field for all children regardless of race, economic status and learning challenges, the following issues undermine proper implementation.

- Insufficient staff. State education agencies and other state level offices are struggling to carry out all of the provisions required by the law (Kim & Sunderman, 2004).

- Inadequate funding. Fiscal problems at the state levels are affecting the ability of states to carry out the mandates. Even though there has been an increase in federal funding directly to the states, there is still under-funding for all provisions. A report issued by the National Education Association (2004) indicated that, "the total 2003 funding gap was $81.4 billion. In all, the 2003 federal appropriations were only about 43 percent of the full funding level" (p. ix). That issue, coupled with reduced revenues at the state level, will seriously undermine the NCLB programs. The States of Virginia, Ohio, Utah, Pennsylvania, are just a few of the states that have concerns about the federal funding provisions and the ability of the states to have enough money to administer the programs. (Communities for Quality Education, 2005; Harvard Educational Review, 2005; National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005; Peterson 2005).

- Unclear terms. To date, there have been no clear guidelines about the type of research and evidence that constitutes "scientifically based research" (Center on Educational Policy, 2004).

- Inappropriate sanctions. The Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) reports have resulted in punitive measures against those school districts that are not making progress on the

students' reading and math scores. The pressure is greater for low-performing schools that are required to offer options for students to transfer to another school and may add to disequilibria in other school districts. (Abedi, 2004; Center on Educational Policy, 2004; Kim & Sunderman, 2004; Public Agenda, 2004).

- Accountability for English Language Learners. Perhaps the most troubling issues are the assessment and academic achievement of the 5.5 million LEP or ELLs. Students are allowed to be in special programs for only two years and then must exit into the regular school program and are subjected to statewide tests in English. The LEP students are counted as a subgroup, yet still must take tests that are constructed and normed for native English speakers. Therefore, the academic achievements of ELLs are often skewed and unreliable. (Abedi, 2004; Kim & Sunderman, 2004).

Another major criticism came from The Center on Education Policy (2004). In a forum to discuss ideas to improve the accountability provisions under NCLB, Popham (2004) reflected that the requirements for NCLB are "remarkably unrealistic" and a number of school districts will be considered "ineffective" and the quality of public education will be lowered. Popham is emphatic about the outcome of the law that places pressure on teachers and erodes instructional quality. Teachers are frustrated with unrealistic goals and punitive sanctions. They may resort to "engage in statue-spurred classroom activities that turn out to be incompatible with high quality instruction…curricular reductionism and excessive test preparation" (p. 1). He is recommending a modification in the law rather than in the implementation regulations. Popham recommends changing AYP to Satisfactory Annual Improvement (SAI). Some of the provisions are: SAI performance of all NCLB Act (2001) identified subgroups are reported publicly, but SAI failure in one or more subgroups does not signify school/district has failed. The School, districts and state report cards plus per-school and per-district citizen review panels should report the Annual Reporting of Success (Popham, 2004).

Reactions to Criticisms

Secretary of Education Paige announced new policies and provisions to ensure flexibility and accountability for Limited English Proficient students on February 19, 2004. In this statement, which took effect immediately, Secretary Paige reversed two of the most damaging provisions of NCLB Act (2001) for the English Language Learner. One was the issue of assessments. The Secretary said:

States have a measure of flexibility regarding how to assess the ELL in their first year in a public school. Prior to this policy change all students were required to be tested in math and reading during their first year. Our new policy provides a much needed one-year transition for our schools. It allows schools to substitute an assessment of English language proficiency, if they so choose, for the assessment of reading competency during a student's first year in U.S. public schools (Paige, 2004, ¶ 6). The new flexibility will allow schools to have the option of taking the reading/language arts content assessment in addition to taking the English language proficiency test. They would take the mathematics assessment, with accommodations as appropriate (Paige, 2004, ¶ 4).

This was a major change that addressed the concerns raised by numerous educators and community organizations stating that students who lacked proficiency in the language of the test consistently performed at lower levels (Abedi, 2004). The second policy change is the issue of classifying the ELL as a subgroup. As soon as students achieve English language proficiency, they exit to the regular program. The Secretary stated:

This new flexibility would allow states for up to two years to include in the LEP subgroup students who have attained English proficiency. This is an option for states and would give states the flexibility to allow schools and local education agencies (LEAs) to get credit for improving English language proficiency from year to year (Paige, 2004, ¶ 5).

Abedi (2004) raised the same issues. He stated that there was inconsistency in LEP classification across and within states and that there is a lack of subgroup stability to accurately measure English proficiency because when a student is moved to a level of "proficient" he/she is moved out of the subgroup and we never have an accurate picture of whether the student attained proficiency and that affects the AYP reporting for LEP students. Allowing for this flexibility may address some of these concerns. These two policy changes were directly aimed at getting a consistent picture of the LEP student without placing punitive measures. The other issues that I highlighted previously are still a concern even though the changes cited above seem to address some of the criticisms.

Table 2.1 indicates the major provisions of each title and the applicability to the English Language Leaner.

Table 2.1

The No Child Left Behind Act (2001): Key Provisions and Applicability to English Language Learners

NCLB Act (2001) Legislative Title	Names of the Titles	English Language Learners (ELL) Applicability	Key Provisions/ and Funding
Title I	Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged	LEP students can participate in programs. Also for Education of Migratory Children	$13.3 billion in funding for Title I, FY 2006
Title II.	Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals	Bilingual and ESL teachers needed nation wide.	$2.92 billion FY2006 Improving Teacher Quality State Grants. $500m, New Teacher Incentive Fund.
Title III.	Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students	Major provisions for instruction for ELLs, immigrant children & youth	$676m. FY 2006. 5.5 million LEP students who speak more than 400 languages. 80% are Spanish speakers.
Title IV	21st Century Schools	ELLs can participate	Safe & Drug-Free Schools and Communities
Title V	Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs	Parents of ELLs can enroll students in options.	Charter Schools, Voluntary Public School Choice, Magnet Schools
Title VI	Flexibility and Accountability	Includes Rural Education Initiatives	Rural Education Initiatives,
Title VII	Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education	Bilingual and bicultural programs	Enrichment, family programs .
Title VIII	Impact Aid Education		Provides for education of students who live on federal properties
Title IX	General Provisions	ELLs can be recruited for the Armed Services	Coordinates programs. Requires LEAs to give services to private schools.
Title X	Repeals, Redesignations, and Amendments to Other Statues	New program addition: Homeless Education	Programs previously here moved into other sections of the law.

Precedents of the No Child Left Behind Act

The United States federal government has made many attempts to reform public education. Since education is primarily a state function, not all of these reforms have met with

success at the state and local level. Several pieces of legislation and influential reports have brought educational issues and policies directly to the American public and have changed educational practices. In the following table, I have outlined some policy reports, court cases, and legislation leading to NCLB.

Table 2.2

Selected Actions Affecting Educational Policy Decisions.

Year	Title of Action	Action Policy Type	Implication
1896	Plessy v Ferguson 163 U.S. 537	Legal. U.S. Supreme Court	Affirmed the "Separate but Equal" clause of Education
1954	Brown v Board of Education 374 U.S. 483.	Legal. U.S. Supreme Court	Overturned the Plessy v. Ferguson rule. Racial discrimination in public education is unconstitutional.
1955	Brown v Board of Education. 349 U.S. 294.	Legal	Known as Brown II, Remanded schools to desegregate at "all deliberate speed."
1964	Civil Rights Act. Title IV	Legal	Affirmed the Equal Protection clause of 14th amendment and desegregation of public schools.
1965	Voting Rights Act	Legal	Affirmed the right of all citizens to vote.
1965	Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title I, P.L. 89-10	Legislative	Funded federal educational programs for poor children.
1966	On Equality of Educational Opportunity. The Coleman Report	Report	Culture of poverty has greater influence on education. Examined differences between black and white children.
1968	ESEA Title VII. The Bilingual Education Act.	Legislative	Funded education programs for children who have limited English speaking ability and come from non-English speaking environments.
1973	Education of All Handicapped Children Act. PL 94-412	Legislative	Funded free and appropriate educational programs for children with disabilities.
1983.	National Commission on Excellence in Education. *A Nation at Risk*	Report	Reported deficiencies in educational programs, educational mediocrity and placing us at risk as a nation.
1989	Presidential Education Summit in Charlottesville Virginia	Report. Business leaders, government, and educators.	Created the National Education Goals. Puts pressure on accountability
1994	Educate America Act. P.L. 103-227	Legislation	Incorporated eight educational goals for 2000.
1996	Second Educational Summit	Report. Business leaders, government and educators	Solidified private business' involvement in educational matters.
2001	No Child Left Behind Act. P.L. 107-110	Legislation	Largest change in educational programs in 35 years. Covers all states and all schools.

Power and Pedagogy

The dissatisfaction with public education on the part of persons with power and influence in government and industry, coupled with many stinging reports about the deplorable state of affairs of the public educational system, has set the stage for a federal law that imposes strict measures of testing and accountability at all educational levels (Meier & Wood, 2004; Peterson & West, 2003). NCLB seemingly allows for flexibility at the state and local level, yet imposes punitive sanctions to those states and local educational agencies that do not meet the standards. Numerous states across the nation are suing the federal government because they have concerns about the mandates of the law and the lack of funding to provide for all requirements. Some states have considered opting out of NCLB altogether (Karp, 2004; NEA, 2006; Silverman, 2006; Sunderman, 2006). As the law comes up for reauthorization in 2007 there will be many critics ready to do battle with this law. A report recently released from Harvard University (Sunderman, 2006) indicated that there have been negotiated changes to the state accountability plans that benefit some states. However, discontent is present in many sectors and "the dangerously high levels of opposition at the state and local level will inevitably affect support for the law in Congress" (Orfield, 2006, as cited in Sunderman, 2006, p. 8).

The trail of Latino ELLs in the United States today has taken many twists and turns throughout the history of the nation. Their educational experiences have been relentlessly tied to language policies, xenophobic attitudes towards people of color, racism, and the pervasive attitude of deficit thinking or *blaming the victim,* for educational disparities and school failure (Valencia, 1997). The stances of Latino organizations and other civil rights organizations and groups to buffer the economic, social, and educational inequalities have been to use the courts, legislation, and community action to struggle for educational equity. This tension has been the result of conflicting philosophical underpinnings of *assimilationist* or *pluralist* social policy regarding language use. In the next section, I discuss issues regarding assimilation and pluralism.

Assimilation and Pluralism

Assimilation aims to eliminate linguistic controversy by inducing a shift toward the dominant language in society. Members of subordinate language groups may be assimilated into the dominant culture and society, and the status of their native language and culture is low. These policies have been justified in terms of trying to promote national unity goals (Schmidt, 2000).

Examples of assimilationist lobbying groups have been U. S. English, Inc. and English First, Inc. Both of these organizations started in the 1980's with the goals of making English the official language of the United States, and according to the promotional material of the English First organization, "to ensure that English continues to serve as an integrating force among our nation's many ethnic groups and remains a vehicle of opportunity for new Americans" (U.S. English, 2006, ¶ 5). U.S. English, Inc. has been the prime mover in attempting to pass a Constitutional Amendment to make English the official language. These groups are joined by another conservative think tank organization, the Center for Equal Opportunity, which states that it endorses a society that is colorblind, gives equal opportunity to everyone, and promotes racial harmony. Furthermore, they state that, "multiculturalists have a firm grip on both elementary and secondary schools and the universities. Their ideology of racial and ethnic difference risks Balkanizing our multiracial society." (Center for Equal Opportunity, 1995, ¶ 4).

Pluralism: The Binary of Assimilation

In contrast, pluralism is the binary of assimilation. In a pluralistic approach in that multiple language groups can live together in harmony without creating a sense of unjust domination (Schmidt, 2000). The English Plus Information Clearing House was created in 1987 in Washington DC, to counterbalance the attacks of the English Only movement and as a viable alternative to the growing linguistic xenophobia in the United States (Castro Feinberg, 2002). The term "English Plus" was appropriated by a civil rights organization in Miami, the Spanish-American League Against Discrimination (SALAD), and emerged as a counterpoint to an attack on bilingual education by former Secretary of Education William Bennett (Castro Feinberg, 2002).

Selected Policy Events Affecting Education of ELLs

In table 2.3, I highlight a number of court cases that demonstrate the challenges and court battles Latinos and other language minority persons have faced in their search for educational equity. The cases are framed around issues of language use, instructional approaches, segregation, undocumented status, and funding equity. A lengthier chronology of events can be found in the works of Castro Feinberg (2002) and Santa Ana (2004).

Table 2.3

Selected Policy Events and Actions Affecting English Language Learners

Year	Action Title	Policy Action Type	Implication
1900	Nationality Act	Legislation	Requires immigrants to speak English to become naturalized.
1917	Jones Act	Legal	Gave U.S. citizenship to people of Puerto Rico. Eligible for Military draft.
1923	Meyer v. Nebraska 262 U.S. 390	Legal	States require English language instruction. However, proficiency in a foreign language is also deemed constitutional.
1946	Mendez v. Westminster 64 F. Supp. 544 (D.C. Cal. 1946)	Legal	*De jure* Segregation of Mexican American children in public schools ended in California schools.
1950	Amendment to the Nationality Act	Legislation	English literacy required for naturalization.
1963	Coral Way Elementary School	Curriculum Design for a two-way bilingual program for Cuban refugees	Inspires implementation of bilingual programs in other parts of U.S.
1968	Title VII of the ESEA, The Bilingual Education Act	Legislation	Establishes bilingual programs economically disadvantaged language minority students.
1973	San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez 411 U. S. 1	Legal	Economic inequalities of school finance for poor school districts for students of Mexican origin.
1973	Keyes v. School District No. 1 413 U. S. 189	Legal	U.S. Supreme Court finds deliberate segregation in northern schools of Hispanos and Blacks.
1974	Lau v. Nichols 414 U.S. 56 (1973)	Legal	U. S. Supreme Court. Guaranteed Non-English speakers access to programs that provide equal educational opportunities.
1974	Aspira v. Board of Education (City of New York), 394 F Supp. 1161	Consent Decree	Established Language Assessment Battery test for placement in bilingual classes.

Year	Action Title	Policy Action Type	Implication
1981	English Only Movement	Community Action Campaign in Miami's Dade County.	Passage of Anti-bilingualism Ordinance. Prohibits county funds for use of any language other than English.
1981	Senator S.I. Hayakawa introduces bill to make English the Official Language of the U.S.	Senate Bill	Introduces amendment to the U.S. Constitution to make English the official language of the nation. Amendment fails.
1981	State of Virginia designates English as the language of the Commonwealth	Legal	First state in the 1980's to pass English Only legislation.
1982	Plyler v. Doe 457 U.S. 202	Legal	States must provide public school K-12 education to illegal immigrants.
1987	English Plus Information Clearing House Established	Community Action. Housed in LULAC	Advocates preservation of other languages and cultures.
1991	Official Language Act of 1991, Law No. 4 (Puerto Rico)	Legal	Declare and establish that Spanish will be the official language of Puerto Rico.
1993	Official Language Act of 1993, Law No. 1, (Puerto Rico)	Legal	Establishes Spanish and English as the official languages of Puerto Rico, both may be used interchangeably. Repeals Law No. 4, of 1991.
1993	H.R. 739 English as the Official language of the United States	Legal	Bill to declare English as the official language of the United States. Bill defeated.
1994	Proposition 187 California	Ballot Initiative	Anti immigration initiative in California to deny illegal immigrants social services, health care and public education. Appellate court ruled unconstitutional.
1996	State of Virginia	Legal VA Code Ann.§ 7.1-42	English is deemed the official Language of the state.
1998	English for the Children. California Proposition 227. Ron Unz initiative	Ballot Initiative	Eliminate bilingual programs. Implement English-only immersion programs.
2000	Arizona Proposition 203.	Ballot Initiative	Ban bilingual education programs.

Year	Action Title	Policy Action Type	Implication
2000	Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency. Executive Order 13166	Presidential Executive Order	Requires all federal agencies and federally sponsored projects available to LEP persons and do not discriminate on the basis of national origin
2003	Rep. Steve King (R-IA) Introduces H. R. 997, The English Language Unity Act of 2003, to declare English as the official language of the U. S.	Legal	Bill has more than 100 co-sponsors. It marks the 7th time in the past seven Congresses that an official English bill has been introduced.
2004	Rep. Virgil Goode (R-VA) Introduces R. J. Res. 94, Constitutional Amendment.	Legal	Introduces bill for a Constitutional Amendment to make English the official language of the U. S.

Language Acquisition

In this section, I include a brief review and framework of how languages are learned, commonly known as "language acquisition," and the implications for learning a second language, or Second Language Acquisition (SLA). This establishes an understanding of the challenges that ELLs face in trying to master a second language in an academic setting. Mitchell & Myles (2001) pose three key questions that are relevant to this research and to the nature of language learning: (a) What is the nature of language? (b) What is the nature of the language learning process? (c) What are the characteristics of the second language learner? Some of the answers are found in the following investigation.

Chomsky and Universal Grammar

With his seminal work about how languages are learned, Chomsky (1969) broke away from Skinner's (1957) behaviorist model, which was popular at the time. He introduced the concepts of *competence,* which included the intuitive rules of grammar and the linguistic structure of the language. He distinguished competence from *performance,* the ability to produce language, and stated that children are born with an innate capacity to learn language, and he proposed the existence of a LAD, *language acquisition device* (Allen & Van Buren, 1972; Hadley, 2001; Shrum & Glisan, 2005). His theory of Universal Grammar states that language is a species-specific, genetically determined capacity, that there is a *core grammar* congruent with universal principles operating across all languages, and that there is a *peripheral*

grammar, which consists of rules that might be derived from an older form of language or borrowed from another language (Hadley, 2001).

Krashen's Monitor Model

Another theory about language acquisition is Krashen's "Monitor Model" (1982). Krashen is a strong advocate of second language acquisition and of bilingual education. He iterates his views on bilingualism by saying that schools that provide children with quality education in their primary language give them both knowledge and literacy. Children *acquire* knowledge through their first language in a subconscious process while it is happening, and *learning* is the conscious process that helps make the English they hear and read more comprehensible. Thus Literacy developed in the primary language transfers to the second language. These components are powerful support for English language development and are two of the three elements needed to create quality bilingual programs. The third element is direct support of English-as-a-Second-Language classes (Krashen, 1999). He is a firm supporter of learning to read in contextual frameworks and not in the isolated framework of phonics. His *Monitor Model* fits in with his views and research on language learning and refutes current thinking about reliance on phonics. Krashen states that the emphasis on NCLB insistence on "systematic, intensive phonics programs" because they are "scientific" is wrong. He suggests that NCLB promoters give the false impression that heavy phonics programs are "scientifically based" while other programs are not. For Krashen, focusing on his Input Hypothesis or his Monitor Model is meshed with comprehensible input (i + 1) structures that are beyond the student's level of competence but is understood within a contextual framework in an environment of high motivation and low anxiety. This is best exemplified when classroom emphasis is placed on interesting, comprehensible and relevant reading with only modest amount of phonics. It fits with his belief that individuals acquire second language in real settings and with the capacity for internal development that has both nature and nurture opportunities related to their environment (Krashen, 2003).

Shrum and Glisan (2005) outline Krashen's five hypotheses:

1. *The acquisition-learning hypothesis*, the subconscious picks up the rules of language;
2. *The monitor hypothesis,* learners monitor or edit their language use and have had sufficient time to know and use the rules;
3. *The natural order hypothesis*, learners acquire the rules in a predictable sequence;

4. *The input hypothesis*, learners acquire and use language when they receive comprehensible input that is interesting, relevant and beyond their level of competence, i + 1, and is contextualized through gestures and intonations; and,

5. *The affective filter hypothesis,* students should be in low anxiety environments in order to achieve an optimal comprehensible learning level.

Gass and Selinker, The Interlanguage Theory

Yet another theory that affects the language-learning process is called *Interlanguage (IL)* that is observable when the learner has not quite mastered the target language and is in the process of developing linguistic competency. Selinker calls this process one of developing your own internal rules, a system that is in development but not a total approximation of native speaker language. According to Gass and Selinker (2001), Interlanguage Theory has elements that do not have their origin in either the native language or the target language. They refer to these discrepancies in language use as *fossilization*, or the cessation of and resistance to learning. Gass and Selinker (2001) also state "Interlanguage plateaus are far from the TL (target language) norms. Furthermore, it appears to be the case that fossilized or stabilized Interlanguage exist no matter what learners do in terms of further exposure to the TL." (p.12)

Cummins, Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills

Cummins is best known for adding two important theoretical constructs to the discourse of language acquisition that examine how long it takes to achieve language proficiency in the second language. He divides the discourse into two areas, basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), and cognitive academic language proficiency skills (CALPS). He suggests that language development is characterized by increasing differentiation according to particular context and tasks. It is necessary to make a fundamental distinction between conversational aspects of proficiency in a language and the cognitive demands of academic development that is more rigorous (Cummins, 2000). Cummins makes the distinction between BICS and CALPS to enable educators to be alert to prematurely exiting ELLs from bilingual classes to mainstream English-only programs on the basis of surface level fluency in English, yet potentially creating academic difficulties in the future. Cummins proposes that conversational aspects of language proficiency, BICS, can be mastered within a shorter period of time usually one to two years, while academic proficiency, CALPS, which goes deeper into cognitive and abstract thinking,

usually takes five to seven years to learn. He has refined the terms into "conversational" and "academic" proficiency, to be used interchangeably with BICS and CALPS.

Vygotsky, Sociocultural Theory and ZPD

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory is significant for teaching a second language and has greatly influenced thinking about teaching and learning in a contextual framework. Three key themes of his work are relevant to the teaching of a second language: (a) a reliance on developmental analysis, (b) a belief that higher individual mental functions have their origins in social life, and (c) an understanding that human social and psychological processes are the tools and signs used to mediate social practices (Johnson, 2004; Wertsch, 1990). Vygotsky posits the theory that one learns in social, cultural, and historical contexts. His sociocultural theory is not a theory of language acquisition as much as it is a theory of human development and cultural change.

As children mediate their learning environments, capacities for expanding their cognitive processes are enhanced when they cooperatively and meaningfully interact with adults and other capable peers. Shrum and Glisan (2005) place Vygotsky's position between two crucial levels of development. When the learner progresses from the "actual developmental level" and moves to the next "potential developmental level" aided by expert assistance, the learner is described as being in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The interaction between experts and novices in problem-solving tasks is called *scaffolding*. According to sociocultural theory, the study of human mental development is the study of how mediated means, which are symbolic and sociocultural in nature, are internalized by the individual (Johnson, 2004). Vygotsky was interested in the individual's potential level of development rather than the actual level of development and criticized testing that focused on the actual rather than the potential levels of development.

Pedagogical Approaches

Hacemos justicia cuando se permite y se da la oportunidad a los niños para el desarrollo de sus potencialidades y la expresión de su personalidad.

[Justice is served when we allow children the opportunity to develop their potential and give expression to their personalities.]

Sister Isolina Ferré (© 2001 García Santos)

Latino ELLs construct their knowledge when they have capable guides who value them. Dewey (1916) stated that the "concept of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind" (p. 97). Dewey is recognized as one of education's foremost thinkers and philosophers. He had a view of society that was democratic and humanistic and did not want social stratification but a society where all members are educated to "personal initiative and adaptability." His educational ideal was one where children could experience learning by doing and creating their own thinking and learning environment. Dewey had a pragmatic and humanistic philosophy by which the worth of social life was measured by "the extent in which the interests of a group are shared by all its members and the fullness and freedom with which it interacts with other groups" (p. 99). This thinking resonates with that of critical pedagogues who believe in creating an educational system that is at once liberating and empowering for individuals in a democratic and transformative society. In this next section, I briefly explore the dimensions of critical pedagogy as it applies to English language learners.

Critical Pedagogy

Just as Dewey is considered the father and philosopher of educational thinking in the United States, Freire is considered the father of Critical Pedagogy and most influential in the development of its philosophy and practice. Freire (1972), as well as Illich (1973), questioned the values of a society that endorses money, power, and domination resulting human oppression, poverty, and scarcity of resources. Both were seminal leaders in helping to bring about social change within the contexts of education and communities against the domination of power and influence of society (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003). Here, I mention just a few issues that delineate this major body of work.

Critical Pedagogy is Liberating

Critical pedagogy is a liberating and transformative framework that helps students analyze the social realities of their world and equips them with the academic and social skills that will enable them to make changes in their environment through social action. Critical pedagogy is not an educational "method" per se, but a *praxis,* which is "the process of connecting reflection with action in the pursuit of knowledge and social change" (Nieto, 1996, p. 392). Critical pedagogy encompasses a wide range of possibilities about teaching and learning that

encourages students to become reflective, active thinkers, open to critique and analysis and able to question institutions to create a better society (Freire, 1972; McLaren, 2003; Nieto, 1999).

Critical Pedagogy is Power

Critical pedagogy supports "the notion that all knowledge is created within a historical context, and it is this historical context that gives life and meaning to human experience" (Darder, et al., 2003, p. 12). According to McLaren (2003), critical pedagogy is concerned with understanding the relationship between power and knowledge and is embodied in the work of Foucault, who stated that power comes from everywhere, is "always already there," and is inextricably implicated in the micro-relations of domination and resistance. From a pedagogical viewpoint, these power relationships are made of the concepts of *discourse,* or *discursive practices,* which refer to the rules by which discourses are formed and who can speak with authority and who must listen (McLaren, 2003, p. 83). These patterns of behavior are found in institutions and in forms of pedagogy regulating what books are used, what teaching approaches should be used, and what values and beliefs should be transmitted to students. The NCLB Act, with its approach to reading through "scientifically based research" for teaching reading with a phonics approach, and standardized testing for measuring accountability, is an example of discursive practices in the current climate of education.

Critical Pedagogy Combats Hegemony

Critical pedagogy is also about understanding the language of hegemony, as expressed in the work of Gramsci (1973). Gramsci defines hegemony as the process of social control that is carried out through the leadership of a dominant sociocultural class over subordinate groups. Hegemony "points to a powerful connection that exist between politics, economics, culture, and pedagogy" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, p.13). It is interesting to note the similar connections between the precedents leading to the enactment of the NCLB Act (2001) and modern-day politics, economics, culture and pedagogy that came together in powerful round table discussions in the 1980s to discuss the future of education in the United States, particularly when reports as *A Nation at Risk* were released.

Critical Pedagogy is Evolutionary

Giroux (2005) does not see critical pedagogy as a static movement, but an evolutionary one because it combines the language of critique, with developing the "language of possibility." The "emphasis is on perceiving language as both an oppositional force and an affirmative force"

(p. 144). These perspectives help students and teachers examine their worlds and to create learning environments in the schools that is reflective, and has the capacity to imbue students with skills to make informed choices about their futures. Educational improvement and social reform starts from within the school. In order to accomplish this, teachers must be involved in empowering their students by committing themselves to democratic ideals. Educators who can become 'transformative intellectuals' are the ones that can help their students become 'border crossers.' According to Giroux (as cited in Guilherme, 2002), the 'border crossers' are the gifted citizens who have the capability to cross linguistic, cultural, social, political and racial borders and be successful socially and economically. For Giroux, (1999) education is not about raising test scores, or educating students to be experts, but in raising the moral and political vision of what it means to educate to govern, lead a humane life, and address the social welfare of those less fortunate than themselves (as cited in Cummins, p. 247). Giroux's point is reflected in the work of Goodlad (2003) and his intent to give learners the tools that would make them effective participants in society.

Transformative Pedagogy Creates Conditions of Collaborative Empowerment

Cummins (2000) uses the term transformative pedagogy as opposed to critical pedagogy. He believes that transformative pedagogy's major thrust is to "create patterns of teacher-student interaction that effectively challenge and transform the ways in that schools have traditionally reproduced social and economic inequalities" (p. 281).

<center>*Pedagogy and English Language Learners*</center>

Teachers who subscribe to a philosophy of critical pedagogy are engaging students in a mutual encounter helping to advance a discourse within a learning community of respect, dignity, and affirmation. Culturally relevant pedagogical approaches that encourage empowerment and diversity are found in the works and practices of leading researchers (Sleeter & Grant, 2003; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). The following represents pedagogical approaches that incorporate a variety of teaching repertoires leading to greater inclusion of the learners' cultural values.

Funds of Knowledge

Moll and Greenberg (1990) have incorporated the Funds of Knowledge as distinct ways of incorporating and extending the values and mores of the home such as *respeto*, [respect], and work ethic translated into the classroom, thereby, helping learners construct their knowledge

through words and actions bridging the home and the school. The teacher who engages in learning about the families of their students and incorporating those into their teaching repertoires helps to establish a new, balanced and cohesive relationship with the parents of the students and builds a more collaborative learning community based on *confianza*, [confidence] (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992). The outcome of participating in this type of learning is to improve teaching practices. Other educators have followed suit.

Hybridity

Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López & Tejada (1999) introduced the concept of hybridity and hybrid language in the Third Space of the classroom by contextualizing what happens in the classroom as "potentially fruitful context of development" (p. 288). Hybridity is "polycontextual, multivoiced, and multiscripted," (p. 287) meaning that there are many voices, registers, conflicts, and much diversity within the learning communities. In addition, there are places in the classroom where formal, informal and colloquial language can co-exist and lead to new experiences generated by the community of learners. Gutiérrez illustrates the example of a teacher using the formal term of *busto* and *pecho* for breast, but also accepting and using the Spanish vernacular *chi-chis*, as a term of *cariño,* or said with "love." By using both terms the teacher builds on the children's local vocabulary, and extends it to the formal meaning using both registers to make the hybrid language a conscious tool for language development.

Repertoires of Practice

Gutiérrez & Rogoff (2003) look beyond the deficit model that was popular in the 1960s, and cultural styles that categorize cultural behaviors as traits. They explore the linguistic and cultural-historical repertoires of practice as a way of observing and engaging learners in productive and meaningful ways. In other words, they describe what is taking place rather than assign definite characteristics of behavior to learning situations and communal activities. They seek to understand learners' involvement through Repertoires of Practice as a framework in building knowledge that aims to "ground observations across multiple settings and communities and to assume various vantage points to understand the complexity of human activity" (p. 23).

Critical Cultural Awareness

Guilherme (2002) introduces the framework of critical cultural awareness as an approach to teaching that challenges educators to expand their visions about teaching and learning in

today's changing world by bridging the philosophical foundations of critical pedagogy and the analytical concepts of postmodern reasoning into a new discourse for learning. Guilherme posits pedagogy of the future and that allows students to "become active citizens prepared to responsibly engage the new emerging structures and to consciously intervene in the shaping of history" (p. 55).

Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist

Education that is *multicultural and social reconstructionist* adds a powerful dimension to the body of knowledge regarding multicultural education according to Sleeter and Grant (2003). They have expanded the Educational that is Multicultural approach, which includes redesigning educational programs that incorporate cultural pluralism, respect for differences, and equity for all groups, with the addition of Social Reconstructionist. "Social Reconstructionists promote a more assertive and transforming educational position that reflects on the various forms of social inequality based on race, social class, gender, and disability" (p. 196). It prepares students to involve themselves in actions that will change societal inequities. The framework is similar to the vision of social justice, equality and democratic education advanced by Critical Pedagogy theorists.

Backward Design

An approach to pedagogy that begins with the end in mind is called Backward Design (Wiggins, 1998). This process assists teachers to plan their work around curriculum frameworks that start with the goals of what they want to accomplish and to make choices about how to teach. In effect, the backward design is not teaching to the test, but suggests a series of strategies that answers three key elements: (a) identify desired results, (b) determine acceptable evidence, and (c) plan learning experiences and instructions. The key design questions are framed in three stages:

1. what is worthy and requiring of understanding?
2. what is evident of understanding?
3. what learning experiences and teaching promote understanding, interest and excellence?

There are six facets of design considerations that include: explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge. The result of this process is to enable students and teachers to apply in depth analysis and to "promote interest and make excellent

performance more likely" (p. 99). This is a particularly innovative approach given today's climate of accountability and content standards imposed by NCLB and other state assessment procedures such as SOL's.

<div align="center">Practices</div>

<div align="center">¡Bendito sea Dios!, y benditos los que dan la mano al hermano(a), para que</div>

<div align="center">su desarrollo pueda tener esperanza.</div>

<div align="center">[Blessed be God, and blessed are they who give their brothers and sisters a</div>

<div align="center">hand so that their development would have hope!]</div>

<div align="center">Sister Isolina Ferré (© 2001 García Santos)</div>

An ESL teacher who subscribes to the philosophy of critical pedagogy is perhaps the most important link for Latino ELLs in the school system (Guilherme, 2002; Nieto, 1996, 2002). The ELL classroom is the gateway that channels ELLs into the other curriculum areas. For ELLs, entering the high school and mastering the cognitive aspects of a second language is challenging, daunting and rigorous. The amount of time in the academic setting of the schools is limited; therefore, ESL teachers oftentimes place themselves under pressure to do the most to help ELLs succeed academically. They are often the mediators between the school administrators, mainstream educators, and the community (Villegas, & Lucas, 2002), The demands of conforming to the policies of NCLB add additional pressures to an already consuming workload. In this section, I described some of the educational practices that have been put in place to help English language learners (ELLs) succeed in academic settings.

<div align="center">Role of Language Associations in Developing Second Language Standards</div>

Major associations in the United States have established standards for foreign and second language teaching such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Inc. (ACTFL) and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL). The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (NSFLEP) established the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (1999).

Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century

Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (1999) is the document resulting from collaborative efforts of nine major language associations including the American Council of on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). It provides the framework for weaving curricular elements that lead to creating reflective and meaningful teaching strategies. It

also provides a philosophical grounding to learning a second language by stating a vision that is humanistic and inclusive of the human condition. This visionary statement says in part that states: "Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students to become equipped linguistically and culturally to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society as well as abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical" (NSFLEP, 1999, p. 1).

The goals for foreign language education are embodied in 5 Cs': Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. Each of these standards has benchmarks and scenarios that help the learner achieve the goals:

- Communication: Communicate in languages other than English.
- Cultures: Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
- Connections: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information.
- Comparisons: Develop insight into the nature of language and culture.
- Communities: Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world (NSFLEP, 1999).

Each standard has sample progress indicators that define student progress and help teachers to create learning scenarios integrated into a sequence of activities. Shrum and Glisan (2005) have woven scenarios that address each framework and helps contextualize teaching using realistic situations for the classroom that avoid mechanical drills, discrete grammar points, or word drills. Instead they propose presentations using poems, stories, and listening to authentic materials. The teacher and the students can then co-construct a more interactive approach to learning and understanding, enabling students to become independent and responsible for their own learning.

The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)

The Teachers of English to speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) also issued their *ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students* in 1997. The standards are framed around three major goals:

- to use English to communicate in social settings;
- to use English to achieve academically in all content areas;
- to use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

The TESOL organization also stated its vision that includes a philosophical framework reinforcing the position that all ELLs are entitled to an effective education that assists them to:

> Achieve near native-like proficiency in English, includes the maintenance and promotion of the students' native languages in school and community contexts, reinforces the concept that knowledge of more than one language and culture is advantageous for all students, and that effective education calls for comprehensive provision of first-rate services and full access to those services by all students (TESOL, 1997, p. 3).

The TESOL standards are framed around three major goals, nine content standards using descriptors, sample progress indicators and vignettes with discussions. The vignettes provide instructional sequences drawn from real-life experiences and help to frame the teaching and learning activities within a contextual framework. TESOL educators have specific general principles to guide their work. They are cognizant that learning a second language is functional and is a long-term process, and that it occurs through meaningful use and interaction and language processes develops interdependently with simultaneous use of different modalities. Language varies with respect to person, purpose and situation, as well as regional, social class and ethnic group differences (TESOL, 1997). Among the principles that resonate with my philosophical stance is that native language proficiency contributes to second language acquisition and that "bilingualism benefits the individual and serves the national interest, and schools need to promote the retention and development of multiple languages" (p.8). TESOL has issued a new document *PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards in the Core Content Areas (2005)* that became available in 2006.

TESOL PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards in the Core Content Areas

The new TESOL *PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards in the Core Content Areas (2005)* "expand the scope and breadth of the ESL content standards by bridging them to specific core curriculum content areas, namely English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies; provide an organizational structures that is synchronized with federal legislation" (TESOL, 2005, p. 5). They also expand the levels of language proficiency to include a fifth dimension. They are: (1) starting up; (2) beginning; (3) expanding; (4) developing; and (5) bridging over (TESOL, 2005). This fifth level, 'bridging over,' is "aligned with state and national academic content standards; once the students have crossed the 'bridge' they will have

reached a level of English language proficiency that supports academic achievement" (TESOL, 2005, p. 14).

ACTFL and TESOL are two major associations that have played a key role in bridging cultural knowledge and language acquisition into successfully learning strategies. These strategies have been used as cornerstones in framing the Standards of Learning (SOLs) for the State of Virginia in Foreign Language and in English-as-a-Second-Language.

<div align="center">

Virginia's Standards of Learning (SOL)

</div>

Foreign Language Standards

The Foreign Language Standards of Learning were adopted in 2000 by the Virginia Board of Education to emphasize the importance of foreign language instruction in the Commonwealth and to enhance the preparation of Virginia's students to compete in an expanding global society (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2000). In all of the levels, the main thrust is the development of communicative competence and their understanding of the other culture. These standards are the end-of-course requirements levels to be attainted. Currently, there are no statewide-standardized tests to determine proficiency in the languages; however, they are to be used in developing curricula and lesson plans. The Standards of Learning are organized around seven major strands: person-to-person communications; listening and reading for understanding; oral and written presentation; cultural perspectives, practices and products; making connections through language; cultural and linguistic comparisons; and communication across communities (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2000).

English Proficiency Standards

The English Language Proficiency Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools was issued by the Board of Education in 2002. The Board of Education acknowledges in its introductory statements that:

> Limited English Proficient (LEP) students enter schools with a wide range of skills and abilities in their native language an/or English that determine the rate that they acquire proficiency in the English language. Research indicates that it may take five to seven years on the average, for a student to become fully proficient in English (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2002).

The Virginia Board of Education structured the English Proficiency Standards of Learning for ESL learners into four levels. These levels are: oral speaking, and oral listening, reading, and writing. As with the work of the associations, the Virginia Board of Education has used these standards as frameworks for program development to meet the needs of the ESL learner in the schools. These ESL proficiency standards have also been aligned with the regular English Standards of Learning (SOLs) curriculum. The differences between the two are the descriptors used under each standard to accomplish the goals. The developers of the standards encourage educators to make a "concerted effort to relate required reading selections to other core subjects including mathematics, science, and history, and social science" (p. 4).

Chapter Two Summary

This chapter has summarized some of the salient features regarding policy, pedagogy, and practices affecting the English language learner today. For more than fifty years, the federal government has taken an increasingly dominant role in defining educational policy for the states. These defining moments have come about over time resulting from societal mores, shifting cultural values, and driving economic market pressures. The NCLB Act (2001) is an effort by the federal government to consolidate all prior pieces of educational legislation into one and give to the states a mandate by which all states must comply with testing and accountability measures.

NCLB is the contextual policy framework for the study of the teaching and learning of ELLs in this research. NCLB has placed an emphasis on accountability and requires schools to achieve a minimum level of proficiency for each subgroup defined by race/ethnicity, socio-economic disadvantage, disability status, and English language learner status (Kane & Staiger, 2003). For ELLs, language proficiency is a strong predictor of success for standardized test performance and for achievement tests used in measuring students' yearly progress (Abedi, 2004). The accountability model used in NCLB is *conjunctive,* meaning that scores on all of the measures that are required for Adequate Yearly Progress, AYP, must be above the criterion point or cut off scores (Abedi, 2004). This type of assessment places pressure on students to achieve well on all core subjects that include mathematics, science, English and social studies, as well as English proficiency. It is a factor in determining success or failure in schools and in charting life choices, career goals and entitlement to Latinos' ELLs future.

My review of second language acquisition shows that learning a second language is a daunting task since it clearly must differentiate between conversational and academic language

proficiency. The length of time in an ELL academic environment must be taken into consideration in the pedagogical process; however, language policies and identity politics often conflict with program design about how best to teach the English language learner. This research examines how ESL teachers in ESL classrooms facilitate the development of English language skills within the demands of NCLB.

I also examine critical pedagogy and transformative education that is committed to educating the whole child in a reflexive, culturally and linguistic manner that are compatible with ideals of a democratic education. Second language educators concerned with social justice and education equality bring to the classroom those visions for building responsible citizens for the 21st century. I have attempted to draw attention to the challenges of Latinos in our contemporary society. Many Latinos face challenges regarding their sociocultural environment, attainting English language proficiency, achieving academic success in high school, accepting their unique identity by society at large, and setting goals for their future. For Latino ELLs who have had varying degrees of formal school experiences in their home countries, acquiring English language academic skills may mean all the difference between success and failure in mainstream classes. Latino ELLs who are increasingly dispersed throughout many parts of the country and form part of the Latino Diaspora find that their paths towards success are often stymied by the policies of state and federal mandates, which rely heavily on standardized testing and assessment. Latino learners may be inhibited by the scope of the school curriculum, which may not incorporate critical pedagogy or other transformative practices of equity and empowerment. Finally, school administrators and teachers who are inundated by policy directives are in challenging positions to initiate reform strategies in their schools to make the education of Latino English language learners a priority.

By reviewing literature that relates to past and present educational policies as well as the theoretical constructs of language acquisition, pedagogy and practices affecting education, I gained greater insight into the complex issues facing the educational trajectory of Latinos. The multifaceted body of research that I have explored has increased my understanding of what lies ahead for educators and policymakers who want to add to the body of literature that contributes to emergent spaces where teachers and students can co-construct a more just and equitable democratic society for the 21st century.

Challenges persist, yet there are also many possibilities for success if educators make room for new discourse. Using the language of possibility, ¡*Sí se puede*! [Yes, you can] (Valencia, 2002), I hope to expand the body of work regarding the Latino language learner. The policies, practices, and pedagogy that inform the Latino learner are the confluence of the research that forms the nexus of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the methodological procedures for this study. To reiterate, the purpose of this qualitative case study is to analyze the impact of the policies of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) on the teaching and learning of 10 Latino English language learners (ELLs) in an urban high school in Virginia. This researcher examines the nexus of the policy of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2001) with the pedagogy of the English as a Second Language (ESL) and content area teachers, and the practices employed by teachers to enable ELLs acquire a second language in an academic setting. An important aspect of this analysis is how do Latino ELLs succeed in mainstream content area classes where English is the language of instruction.

Justification for use of Qualitative Methods

This is a qualitative case study using ethnographic data collecting methods. Creswell (2003) describes qualitative research stating "that it occurs in natural settings where human behavior and events occur" (p. 198). My goal in this study was to learn how Latino ELLs were acquiring a second language in the academic setting of their high school. I observed the natural setting of the ESL classroom, seeing how the ESL teachers guided Latino ELLs to acquire second language skills within the contextual framework of the classroom and the pedagogical strategies she employed. I observed Latino ELLs integrate the four language processes—listening, speaking, reading and writing in the ESL classroom. In addition, I observed the Latino ELLs within the context of the content area classes where they participated in an all-English speaking environment with native English speakers.

Holistic View

Merriam (1998) ascribes special features of the qualitative case study as being *particularistic*, focusing on a particular situation, event, or phenomenon (p. 29) and embracing a holistic view of the situation. From a sociocultural perspective, I describe language learning by ELLs engaged in specific situational social interactions in both the ESL classroom and the content area classrooms in that they constructed their identities as learners.

According to Rossman and Rallis (2003) the outcome of a qualitative study is to "learn about some aspect of the social world and to generate new understandings that can be used" (p. 4). The ways in that Latino students demonstrate cognitive academic English skills in content

area classes are important elements in analyzing academic success. Academic success in high school is the building foundation for successful career options and choices for higher education in the future. The pictures that emerge from this study can inform educators; policymakers and stakeholders as to what are the best policies, pedagogies, and practices to assist Latino ELLs acquire the academic and linguistic skills to have successful experiences in high school. Stake (2000) identifies a type of study called *intrinsic case study,* one that is "undertaken because, first and last, the researcher wants better understanding of the particular case" (p. 437). In doing this research I wanted to arrive at a better understanding of the nexus of the policy mandates of NCLB with the pedagogy and practices of ELL and content area teachers who are assisting Latino ELLs in the acquisition of second language skills in the academic setting of a high school.

A characteristic of the qualitative research design paradigm is the use of multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic and employ the techniques of interviewing, observing, gathering documents and examining material culture (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). In this research I used multiple methods including observing the ESL classroom and the content area classrooms, conducting focus group interviews with Latino ELLs, conducting individual interviews with Latino ELL participants, ESL teachers, content area teachers, school principal, assistant principal, and guidance counselor; and reviewing documents from the federal, state, and district office levels. Rossman and Rallis also identify the *weltanshauung,* or worldview, that shapes the complete project. An understanding of the steps that researchers take begins with "early curiosity all the way to writing the final report, the researcher's personal biography is the lens through which he sees the world" (p. 10). As a reflective researcher, I systematically reflected on my personal biography and the lens through which I see the world as a second language educator, as a member of the ethnic community I am studying, and as a member of the community of practice of my peers, colleagues, and the academy.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity according to Rossman and Rallis (2003) begins in the research setting. As I observed and interviewed, I reacted to the participants' words and actions by jotting notes alongside the seating charts I created for the observations, which in turn served to, "trigger thoughts, hunches, working hypotheses, and understanding of the setting and the participants" (p.50). Reflexivity is an interactive and cyclical phenomenon reflecting interplay between the *etic* perspective or the researcher or outsider's view, and the *emic* perspective or the participant's

insider's view that answers the questions, "What sense do I make of what is going on or of the person's actions?" (p. 50). In order to become as reflexive as possible and to diminish the effects of possible bias, I articulated my purposes, goals, and assumptions about the research to all participants.

Limitations of the Study

A number of factors place limitations on this study. The following represent the most influential ones. In this study I examined one ESL classroom in one urban high school in Virginia to describe the epistemology and social reality of the effects of the NCLB policy on the pedagogy and practices of teaching ELLs. Generalizations about the entire scope of impact of the NCLB policy development on the teaching and learning of Latino ELLs cannot be drawn. I interviewed only Latino students, not the entire population of other ELLs from countries, such as Afghanistan, Haiti, Palestine, or Somalia who may be in the same ESL classroom. I chose only Latino ELLs for this study primarily because I speak Spanish and am able to understand from a linguistic, as well as a cultural, perspective their responses during the interviews. I am a member of the cultural community of the students that I interview. This has both positives and negatives. One the one-hand, I am perfectly able to communicate with the participants in their native language, which may enhance communicative interactions with each student. On the other hand, I have to be careful to be as objective as I can and not to be overtly subjective, or so emotionally invested in the observations and interviews that I lose sense of their own perceptions.

Another limitation is that I am a member of the university community and perhaps could be seen as an outsider by the students and faculty. Latino ELLs could see me as a p*rofesora,* [professor], usually connotes a certain privilege, knowledge, and respect in the Latino world and somewhat removed from their world. The faculty of the high school may see me as an outsider, and have reservations about the role of university personnel coming into their school, and may not see me as a colleague even though I have taught many years in high schools in the United States.

Site Selection

The urban high school that I selected for this research is one of the largest schools in the school division. Its student population consisted of 32% white, 62% African American, three percent Hispanic, two percent Asian. There were 100 teachers, two that were ESL teachers. The school is a comprehensive high school offering all areas of academic content, vocational

education, including an International Baccalaureate program (IB) as well as advanced placement classes. This school was also selected for my study because it consolidated the number of ELL high school students into one program. In previous years, services for ELLs at the high school also included middle school students. The 2004 academic year provided services to the high school students only and the middle school students' educational program was be conducted at their respective schools. The 48 ELLs at the high school are now all high school students. The school is constructed similar to a college campus with separate buildings housing thematic wings including technology, English, social studies, and sciences.

Entry into the Field

At the time of this research I was a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Teaching and Learning in the School of Education at Virginia Tech. I had supervised preservice teachers in their Early Field Experience placements and their Student Teaching placement in the Green Valley since 2004. My engagement in these activities assisted me in establishing credibility as a doctoral candidate under the supervision of renowned faculty at Virginia Tech and in establishing trust and rapport with the ESL teachers, and other faculty members.

Participant Selection

Ten Latino ELLs were selected to participate in this study. Recommendations for participants came directly from the ESL teacher and the principal's consent. Participants had to be in the United States from one to five years, and in grades 9 through 12. Upon examining the make-up of the school's Latino ELL population, two groupings were created for the focus group interviews: (1) intermediate ELLs, and (2) advanced ELLs, and mainstreamed students who were no longer in ESL classes. I realized that I would get a fuller and richer description of the experiences of Latino ELLs if they were separated according to second language proficiency. The former ELLs are in an all-English environment, however, they may come to the ESL teacher for additional help, or come to the ESL classroom during study periods.

My interviews with Latino ELL focus groups showed that they came from various places including Columbia, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. These students have been in the United States from one year and two months to five years. A majority came directly to the Green Valley from their home countries. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the ten Latino ELLs included in this study.

Table 3.1

Characteristics of Latino English Language Learners (ELLs)

Name***	Sex	Grade	Native Country	Yrs in US	ELL Type	Tests SOLs* SELP**	Employment	HS Graduate
Graciela	F	12	Cuba	3	Mainstream	SELP, Algebra, World History English, Earth Science	No employment	Y
Ismael	M	12	Puerto Rico	5	Mainstream	SELP, Algebra, World History English, Earth Science	Fast Food Restaurant, 40 hrs per week	N
Juan	M	11	Mexico	5	Mainstream	SELP	Fast Food Restaurant, 40 hrs per week	N
Julie	F	12	Colombia	5	Mainstream IB Span.	SELP, Algebra, World History English, Earth Science	No employment	Y, IB**** SP
Ana	F	9	Mexico	2	Intermediate	SELP	Car wash, 2 hrs per day	N
Hugo	M	10	Mexico	2	Advanced	SELP	No employment	N
Rosalinda	F	10	El Salvador	2	Advanced	SELP	Mexican Restaurant, 20 hrs part time	N
Mario	M	9	Honduras	1.2	Intermediate	SELP	No employment	N
Lucía	F	9	Mexico	2	Intermediate	SELP	No employment	N
Manuel	M	9	Mexico	1.5	Intermediate	SELP	No employment	N

*   Virginia's Department of Education, Standards of Learning (SOLs)
**   Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP)
***   Pseudonym
****   International Baccalaureate program

Data Sources and Collection Procedures

My data collection for this study includes a number of ethnographic data collecting techniques such as: focus group interviews, individual interviews, classroom observations in content area classes and ESL classes, document reviews, ethnographic field notes, and my personal journal and reflections. In carrying out this qualitative study, I spent from February to June of 2005 in the school, making 30 visits to the school. Table 2 indicates the data collection methods used.

Table 3.2

Summary of Research Procedures, Question No. 1. How does the NCLB law affect the teaching and learning environment of the English language learners' (ELL) classroom in one urban high school?

Data Collection	Data Collection Tools	Data Analysis
Documents • NCLB Act (2001) • Virginia SOLs • Virginia's Foreign Language Standards of Learning • Virginia's English Language Proficiency Standards • English Language Learner's Plan, Public Schools • ESL teachers Unit Plans • ESL teachers Lesson Plans • Latino ELLs content area classroom work • Latino ELLs classroom work • Latino ELLs media work • Local Newspaper articles	• Read texts, documents, and notes	• Content analysis • Analyze what the documents say • Look for patterns and themes • Compare methods triangulation, documents and cross checking with other sources of data interviews, observations, and field notes • Select patterns and themes from the document data • Be reflective • Write systematically in my personal journal record
Interviews • Interview Division Coordinator of ELL program • Interview Principal • Interview Assistant Principal • Interview Guidance Counselor • Focus interviews 10 Latino ELLs • Interview 10 Latino ELLs • Interview ESL teachers • Interview Content area teachers	• Interview Protocol Questions for each participant	• Transcribe all taped interviews • Spanish interviews were also summarized into English • Conduct member checks with Latino ELLs • Conduct member checks with adult participants • Discuss findings with committee chairperson

Table 3.3

Summary of Research Procedures, Question No. 2. How do Latino ELLs acquire the academic knowledge and second language skills to succeed in regular classes with native English speakers?

Data Collection	Data Collection Tools	Data Analysis
Observations • ESL Classroom • Content Area Classroom	Observation Protocols: • Classroom Observation Guide • Language Functions and Analogous Classroom Experience Guide • Seating Chart • Venn Diagram • Field Note Format, and Observation Protocol	• Provide rich description of data • Describe classroom setting, events, and methods triangulation • Produce Visual mapping, comparing events to contextual framework of the classes • Draw pictures of social settings in the school, compare pictures with observation notes • Analyze Field notes and jottings with other observation guides • Conduct peer review. Consult with peer for data analysis • Record my analysis in my personal journal of reflections • Conduct on going review of literature on NCLB, teaching and learning, policies, pedagogies, and practices

Interviews

   Seidman (1998) states: "interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 3).

   Focus group. According to Krueger and Casey (2000): "The intent of a focus group is to promote self-disclosure among participants. We want to know what people really think and feel" (p.7). Krueger and Casey further state: "Focus group presents a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because participants are influencing and influenced by others— just as they are in life" (p.11). By conducting focus group interviews during the school day in the ESL classroom, I established a comfortable setting and atmosphere where they were receptive to speak about their experiences in learning a second language. Each focus group lasted one block period, or 90 minutes. I conducted one final focus group interview with all 10 Latino ELLs at the end of the school year in May. The protocol questions were in keeping with the language register of Latino ELLs. Please refer to Appendix K for sample protocol questions.

Latino ELLs individual interviews.   I also conducted individual interviews with each Latino ELL at least once for 45 to 90 minutes. I transcribed all of the interviews for the focus groups and for the individual interviews. All of the students spoke primarily in Spanish. At times, the students would switch from Spanish to English in the interviews, or vice versa. I transcribed the focus group interviews in the language that the students' used, primarily, in Spanish. In addition, for each focus group interview I wrote an analysis in English consisting of the major themes that emerged from the interviews. To authenticate the students' voices in Spanish, I transcribed verbatim what they said in the focus group interviews and in the individual interviews. I transcribed the English portion into a vernacular that is in keeping with the students' register and tone, and not as a word for word translation. The students' comments and commentary that are presented in the quotes throughout this chapter represent the authentic texts and are included without any grammatical changes. Please refer to Appendix L for sample protocol questions.

Faculty interviews. I interviewed the Division Coordinator of ELL and Foreign Language Programs on site at the headquarters of the school division for 90 minutes. At the school site I interviewed administrators and faculty, including the principal, the assistant principal, one guidance counselor, two ESL teachers, and eight content area teachers. A semi-structured interview protocol was used for each administrator and guidance counselor and for the content area teachers. Each interview lasted from 30 minutes to 60 minutes. The interviews with administrators lasted from 40 to 90 minutes. I conducted two interviews with the ESL teacher where I also carried out my classroom observations. In addition, I also interviewed the second ESL teacher in the school. These interviews lasted 90 minutes each time. Please refer to Appendixes F-J for Protocol sample questions for each category.

Observations

Ritchie and Lewis (2003) state: "Observation offers the opportunity to record and analyze behavior and interactions as they occur…. This allows events, actions, and experiences to be 'seen' through the eyes of the researcher" (p. 35). I observed the pedagogy of the ESL teacher and the approaches she used to assist students in learning second language functions such as informal talk, discussing, explaining, and debating as well as using the written language. In observing the ELLs in the ESL classroom I used checklists, and a seating chart to record the social interactions of the ESL classroom and also the content area classroom. Patton (2002)

states that the purpose of observational analysis is to take the reader to the setting that was observed. This means that observation data must have depth and detail. In Patton's term the observer's notes become the eyes, ears, and perceptual senses for the reader. By observing the classes that ELLs were in, I described how these students responded to the academic environment of an ELL classroom as well as the content area classrooms. Patton (2002) also gives suggestions about making observation, which include: (a) write descriptive field notes, (b) gather variety of information from different perspective, (c) triangulate different kinds of data.

ESL classroom. I observed the ESL classes attended by Latino ELLs a total of 10 times for both intermediate and advanced class. The ESL class was conducted in the regular ESL classroom as well as in the school's media center and library.

Content area classrooms. I observed Latino ELLs in content area classes in Computer Drafting, two Earth Science classes, Geography, Math, Public Speaking, Spanish III, and United States History. I recorded my observations using observation protocols, seating charts, Venn diagrams, and notes that I jotted down while observing; or jottings as recommended by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) about classroom interactions to remind me of incidents, which I would write up more fully when I transcribed my field notes. See Appendix M for observation protocols.

Observation Field notes. Emerson, Fritz, and Shaw (1995) state important implications regarding participation and writing field notes: "What is observed and ultimately treated as 'data' or 'findings' is inseparable from the observational process" (p. 11). They further exhort that the researcher should give special attention to the indigenous meaning and concerns of the people being studied and should detail both the social and interactional processes in everyday life. Another point that they make regarding field notes is that they provide a distinctive resource for preserving experience close to the moment of occurrence, thereby, deepening reflection and understanding of the experience. They report that it "is critical to document closely these subtle processes of learning and resocialization *as they occur"* (p. 13). An important aspect of recording things quickly is to have a mental picture of the event, or to recall details by writing 'jottings' in my field notes. I followed the procedures outlined by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw.

An integral part of this research was to observe the total social life of the school environment, particularly the public spaces of the school such as the lunchroom, the school media center, and the playing fields and to see where the Latino students utilized space for their

own socialization. In each of my visits to the school I was able to observe the dynamics of the movement of students from period to period, seating arrangements in the lunch spaces, and congregation of the students in open spaces of the campus. I used field notes to write my observations about the school climate.

Transcriptions

All interviews were audiotaped-recorded and transcribed. Seidman (1998) tells us that to work "most reliably with the words of participants, the researcher has to transform those spoken words into a written text to study…by preserving the words of the participants, researcher have their original data" (p. 97). In my research study I conducted the interviews with the 10 Latino ELLs. As stated earlier, all students spoke in Spanish; at times they switched to English, or a combination of English and Spanish, better known as code switching or Spanglish according to Zentella, (1998). I transcribed each Spanish interview. The focus group interviews were also transcribed in Spanish as well as transcribed into thematic summaries in English. My goal was to hear the students' voices in as natural form and speaking register as possible, and as such I did not correct any grammar or structural linguistic forms in L1 or L2 when I was transcribing the tapes. If there are any points of clarification that I needed to make in the transcripts I bracketed [ ] the items in the notes according to accepted ethnographic procedures for writing transcripts.

Document Review

A rich source of material that is integral to this research was a thorough analysis of the policies at the federal, state, and local levels that drive the pedagogy and practices to teach ELLs a second language. Patton (2002) states that program documents provide valuable information because of what the researcher can learn directly from reading them but they also provide ideas for generating questions that can be pursued through direct observation and interviewing. I examined documents pertaining to the education of ELLs.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

</div>

According to Patton (2002) the purpose of qualitative inquiry is to produce findings and to make sense of the massive amounts of data, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) also state that data analysis is a process of systematically arranging all of the materials collected in order to increase understanding of the research and to present those findings to other readers and audiences. I organized my data into manageable categories using inductive analysis. I

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filtered my information through various forms of analysis such as interview protocols, observations of content area classes, observations of ESL classes, and reviews of students' class work.

Triangulation

The benefits of using multiple data collection techniques reveal different aspects of the reality according to Patton (2002). I chose to do interviews, observations, and document reviews. I triangulated qualitative data sources by comparing and crosschecking my observations with my interviews and comparing the perspectives of people from different points of view. This was important when I wanted to analyze pedagogy and practices from the perspectives of the ESL teacher and content area teachers. Finally, I wanted to check my interviews with Latino ELLs students with program documents and written evidence that corroborated what interview respondents and I perceived as an opportunity for greater insight.

Member Checks

I showed my Latino ELLs transcripts and translations of the interviews and asked them to review the data and make any additional comments or corrections. Two of the intermediate Latinas enjoyed seeing in print what they had said in the individual interviews.

Peer/Colleague Examination

Throughout the research process I consulted with my advisor for guidance. I also consulted with another member of my committee, who has had extensive experience working in the area schools. Both were helpful in guiding me with aspects of the school ecology and the landscape of the community.

Ethical Issues

As a researcher, I am ethically bound to honor the fundamental rights of individuals who participated in this study and to respect their privacy. A second important element is what Rossman and Rallis (2003) state is "holding in confidence what they share with you" (p. 74). To that end, I asked participants to choose pseudonyms to protect their privacy. I followed the procedures set by the university as outlined in the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and gained the informed consent of the participants in the study. My role as a researcher was to explain to the participants my intention in conducting this study and in sharing my findings with them and to follow the protocols as outlined by Virginia Tech. In addition, I prepared a separate proposal

for the School Division asking for permission to participate in the study. I did not begin any research in the school until the school division gave authorization to complete the study.

Document Analysis

I conducted document analysis of the following: The NCLB Act (2001); Virginia Department of Education reports, such as the Consolidated Application Accountability Plan, Proposed Amendments to Virginia Consolidated State Application Accountability Plans, the electronic web site of Virginia Implements No Child Left Behind, and Adequate Yearly Progress Results; The English Language Learners (ELL) Plan Book prepared by School Division's Public Schools; the Handbook from the high school; ESL teacher's lesson unit and lesson plans; content area teachers' samples of materials used in the classes; samples of ELL students' work in the ELL classes using written text and technology and samples of ELL students' work using technology in the content area classes.

Summary of Methodology

This chapter presents a description of the methodology that was followed to conduct this research to answer the questions posed for this study. The chapter outlined the selection process for the selection of 10 Latino ELLs, the focus group interviews and the individual interviews that were conducted with each student. In addition I documented eight observations of ELLs in content area classes as well as 10 observations in the ESL classroom. I interviewed school administrators, guidance counselor, seven content area teachers, two ESL teachers, and conducted field notes. I also interviewed the School Division's Coordinator of ELL and Foreign Language programs. I reviewed pertinent documentation on the NCLB, state regulations and superintendent's memoranda. I described the setting where the study took place and the data collection and analysis procedures. The results from this study are discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings: Sociocultural Environment for Latino ELLs

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to analyze the impact of the policies of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) on the teaching and learning of 10 Latino English language learners (ELLs) in an urban high school in Virginia. I studied the nexus of the policy of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001) with the pedagogy of the ESL and content area teachers, and the practices employed by teachers to enable students to acquire a second language. This enabled me to examine the contextual framework of a large urban school and factors converging to help Latino English language learners (ELL) learn academic English to succeed in the high school. By reviewing the policy, pedagogy, and practices used in this school I saw the connectedness of an entire school and the relationships fostered by students and faculty to support a climate for learning for English language learners.

In this chapter I examine sociocultural factors such as adapting to a new setting, school climate, and racial and ethnic identity that have an impact on teaching and learning English in an academic setting. I describe the features of the research that I conducted within the contextual lens of NCLB policy, pedagogy, and practices of the high school. I report the results of my analysis of interviews with the administrators of the ELL programs at the school Division level, as well as the school administrators, and content area teachers. Included are their reflections about ELLs in the school and in the mainstream classes.

The research questions guiding the study were:

1. How does the NCLB law affect the teaching and learning environment of the English language learners' (ELL) classroom in one urban high school?

2. How do Latino ELLs acquire the academic knowledge and second language skills to succeed in regular classes with native English speakers?

Although this school has less than four per cent Latino students, the issue of Latino identity and Spanish language use permeates much of the discourse. According to Nieto (1999, 2002); Santa Ana (2004) the voices of children are often not heard or are silenced because of their inability to speak the second language, however, Mitra (2004) points out the importance of student voice as a potential for improving schools. Listening to students' voices gives us pause to think about the present realities of their world, the challenges they face in and out of school, and the dreams they have for the future.

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Throughout the analysis and findings, I will use the students' voices with pseudonyms as reflected in the focus groups and in the individual interviews to highlight their thoughts. Table 3.1 shows the characteristics of the Latino ELLs in this study. My interviews with the focus group and with the individual students showed that they came from various places in the Spanish-speaking world such as Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. These students have been in the United States from one-year and 2 months to 5 years. A number of them are also working many hours per week while attending school.

The Contextual Framework of the Study

Three organizing principles undergird the findings of this chapter and form the intersections of the policy, pedagogy, and practices of education for Latino ELLs in an academic setting. Specifically, this researcher examined and analyzed the sociocultural aspects of teaching and learning:

- adaptation to a new setting;
- school climate;
- racial and ethnic identity.

In Figure 2, Factors Affecting Education of Latino English language learners (ELLs), I list the issues raised in the Latino focus groups and in the individual interviews. In this chapter I concentrate on the organizing principles and the nexus of the policy, pedagogy and practices of my findings.
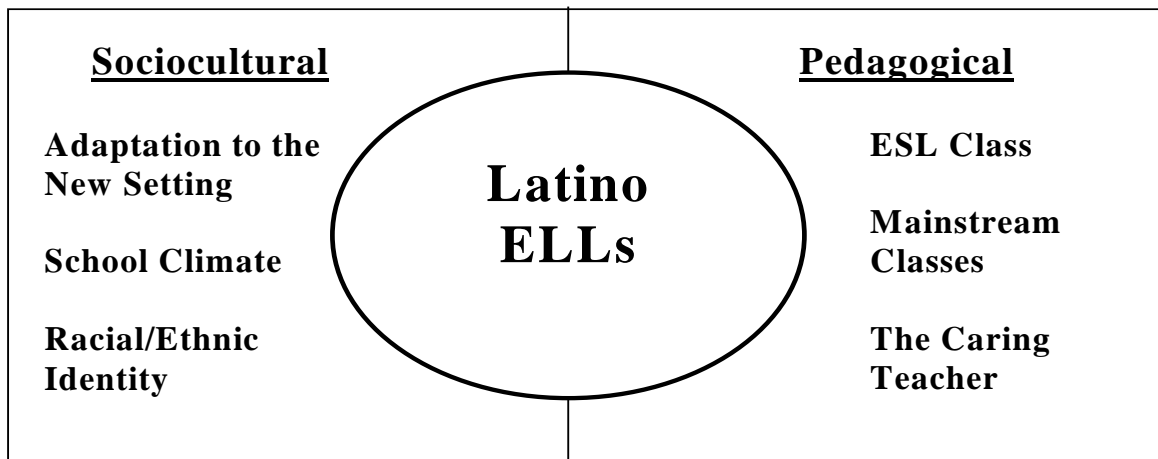

Sociocultural	**Latino ELLs**	**Pedagogical**
Adaptation to the New Setting		**ESL Class**
School Climate		**Mainstream Classes**
Racial/Ethnic Identity		**The Caring Teacher**

Figure 2. Factors Affecting the Education of Latino English Language Learners (ELLs)

Adaptation to a New Setting

Adapting to a new setting, whether home or school, is never easy when one is an adolescent. It is even more challenging if that person is a native speaker of another language, which is not used as the primary medium of instruction in the school (Carger, 1996; García & Wiese, 2002; Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Villegas, 2004; Vollmer, 2004). In this section I describe how Latino ELLs, speaking in their own words, described the journey to their new homes in the Green Valley, and to their new school. I also present the challenges they faced, such as adapting to the school culture, and feeling out of place. These themes emerged from my conversations in the two focus groups composed of (1) intermediate, and (2) advanced and mainstreamed Latino ELLs as well as individual interviews with each participant.

A number of students expressed reservations about arriving in the Green Valley; they found adapting to the new environment challenging because of change in the climate, the space of a city, or the confinement of the place. The Latino ELLs expressed it in these ways:

> *No me gusta el frío.* [I don't like the cold.] (Lucía, 9th grade)
>
> *Extraño caminar por la ciudad.* [I miss walking through the city.] (Hugo, 10th grade)
>
> *Me siento como una prisionera.* [I feel like a prisoner.] (Rosalinda, 10th grade)

These students were expressing the frustration of immigrants in new surroundings. They were brought here by a parent and were moved from their home countries at a critical period in their adolescent lives. One Latino ELL student said:

> *Una cosa es adaptarse, y otra es gustarle.* [One thing is to adapt to a new environment and quite another to like it.] (Graciela, 12th grade)

Like many other children of Latino immigrants these youngsters came with their families because of socio-economic or political reasons. They followed their parents and families to the new surroundings of the Green Valley. The transition to the new environment is not always easy. Dislocation engenders numerous threats to a sense of identity due to the new culture, new language, and are severely challenged in the new place and space (Ainslie, 2002; Hamann, Wortham, & Murillo, 2002; Moll & Gonzalez, 1997; Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002).

Part of that dislocation is what happens in the new school environment. In effect, adapting to a new setting, Latino ELLs offered a number of opinions regarding their transition. These adaptations manifested their psychosocial state as:

- disruption in family life and transition from one place to another;

- uncomfortable with climatic and environmental changes;
- emotional disconnection of feeling as strangers in a new environment.

Just as adapting to a new environment in the Green Valley presented issues for Latino ELLs, so too did adapting to the new school and the culture of the school. In the following section, I describe their impression of how it felt to transition to the new school culture.

Adapting to School Culture

Adjustment to a particular place is compounded by the challenges in adjusting to a new school environment (García, 2005; Olsen, 1997). In this section I examine the many factors that affect adaptation to the high school environment. For some ELLs these transitions meant that they lost academic time from the time they left their home countries to the time they enrolled in a new school by almost a year. However, others felt the frustration of being reduced to a lower academic level due to lack of English cognitive and academic skills, and of receiving lower grades. For some of the ELLs these factors made them feel depressed causing a sense of frustration to creep in when they were told they had to repeat a grade. The statements below reflect some of the frustration.

Estuve medio año allí [California] pero no fui a la escuela.

[I was there for half a year, but I didn't go to school.] (Manuel, 9th grade)

Yo era una estudiante I-B [advanced] en mi país, y cuando llegué me deprimí totalmente cuando sacaba un 70 u 80.

[I was an I-B student in my country, and when I got here, I got depressed whenever I would get a 70 or an 80.] (Graciela, 12th grade)

En mi casa me regañaban cuando yo sacaba una B, y ahora que llegué aquí, me acostumbre a ver tantas F's.

[I was admonished at home [in Puerto Rico] whenever I got a B, but now when I got here, I got used to seeing so many F's.] (Ismael 12th grade)

The frustration at not being successful academically was compounded by not being successful in managing English and the second language acquisition skills. This frustration often led to feeling out of place in the new school.

Feeling Out of Place

For some Latino ELLs, the transition to school in the United States felt somewhat strange partly because learning academic English for success in school was a challenge. Many feared

insecurities regarding their language use as well as their comprehension and understanding in content area classes. When students have to take the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL's), required for high school graduation since 1999, there is a double challenge to know the academic content and to use the second language to communicate in the classroom. The utter frustration expressed by a Latino male's desire to return to his home country captures the breadth of emotion.

> *Es más hubo una vez que lloré del coraje porque no entendía y me enojé y lloré, «me quiero ir pa' México.»*
>
> [Well, there was a time that I cried out of anger, because I didn't understand and I got angry and cried, "I want to go to Mexico."] (Hugo 10th grade)

Other students echoed these sentiments:

> *Llegué a una escuela donde no había ningún hispano; nadie me hablaba español.* [I arrived at a school where there wasn't not even one Hispanic; no one spoke to me in Spanish.] (Lucía 9th grade)
>
> When I came to school the first day, I felt *raro* [strange] because I didn't speak English. [Mario 9th grade]

One way of avoiding the embarrassment of not understanding is to *skipiar* [skip] the class. One student stated what others also confirmed:

> *Solamente tengo dificultades en dos clases, biología y historia, ahí tienen palabras diferentes que no he aprendido todavía. . . .Yo soy el único [latino] en la clase de historia . . . .Sí, por eso a veces no entro a la clase. . .a veces no entro porque simplemente me da vergüenza de que tal vez piensen que simplemente no sé nada.*
>
> [I only have difficulty in two classes, biology and history. They have different words that I haven't learned yet. . . .I'm the only Latino in that history class. . . . Yes, that's why I sometimes don't go in that class because I'm embarrassed that other people [students or teachers] will think that I don't know anything.] (Hugo 10th grade)

According to Freeman (2004) the distinction between learning English and learning *in* English goes to the heart of the educational challenge; it is necessary to learn the mechanics and structure of the English language and also learn the academic content of the materials being studied in English. This was confirmed in my research study. Many of the Latino ELLs expressed the frustration of being in a content area classroom where they were the only Latinos, or where they were embarrassed to speak in front of the class. The academic content of the

subject matter was also a challenge because they had to learn all of the cognitive and conceptual material in English.

Adapting to the new school environment was a shock for some of the Latino ELLs who were used to having good grades in their home countries and now came to a new setting where they were often placed in lower grades because of their lack of ability in the second language. Experiences of comparing their present realities from their previous school experiences and their current ones created a sense of frustration and anger for some who said:

Lloré me quiero ir pa' Mexico.

[I cried, I want to go to Mexico.] (Hugo, 10th grade)

Finally, feeling out of place was often connected with not being able to speak English in the mainstream classes as was described by one of the students:

Todos te miran así, como algo raro diciendo, ¿Y este, de donde vino?

[Everyone is looking at you, like someone strange, saying:

"And this one, where did she/he come from?"] (Julie 12th grade, Focus group interview[2])

To avoid the feeling out of place some students will skip classes instead of facing the reality of being in a mainstream class and the embarrassment of having kids look at them strangely.

Summary of Adapting to a New Setting

To summarize the issues in adapting to a new setting, adjusting to school culture, and feeling out of place in a new environment, Latino ELLs faced many challenges in their journey. For some it was a displacement from a comfortable space (Nespor, 1997). For others it was a shock and an adjustment to make the educational transitions. The following themes emerged as Latino ELLs mentioned their views:

- Climatic changes. It meant that they were in a colder place and some felt uncomfortable with the cold weather.
- Space. They moved to apartments as opposed to their houses in their native countries and missed the openness of their surroundings, and the abilities to open windows and let in fresh air.
- Hemmed in. Some of the students felt confined, or like prisoners because they could not go outside their homes.

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[2] To differentiate from what was said in the focus group interviews and what was said in the individual interviews, I add the designation of focus group to indicate that the information was retrieved during the focus group meetings.

- Transportation. Students reported they could not walk around the streets because the distances required that they had to drive everywhere.

- Academic English. Some students were placed in lower grades because they did not have sufficient command of English to handle the academic content of the subject matter at their grade level.

- Speaking English in public. Some students felt embarrassed to speak in front of the class for fear of being laughed at by native English speakers.

- Frustration and anger. Lack of English competency provoked anxiety, and a desire to return to the native country on the part of some students.

In the following section I discuss the school climate and how it bears an impact of the policy, pedagogy, and practices of learning a second language for the Latino ELLs.

School Climate

School climate encompasses all aspects of the school environment and refers primarily to the "school's effects on students" (McBrian & Brandt, 1997, p. 89). Therefore, it also incorporates the appearance of the school grounds and the school buildings, the policies enacted by the school division administrators and school site administrators, the pedagogical practices of the teachers, the interactions of students, and the social and academic setting that permits Latino ELLs to acquire English language skills to succeed in school. School climate relates to the total environment of a school. Establishing a school climate that respects individual differences and fosters a safe and orderly environment with clear expectations regarding behavior for all students may support academic achievement for diverse learners (American Federation of Teachers, 2004). Moos (1979) categorizes school climate as the social environment that allows for personal growth and relationships to develop between students and teachers, and to make certain that school policies are clear and enforceable for everyone. In this section I explore the dimensions of school climate that I observed and discussed with administrators, faculty, and students:

- school policies;
- counseling;
- school discipline policies;
- extracurricular activities;
- academic mentoring and leadership roles;
- academic excellence.

Although Latino ELLs are a minority in this school comprising less than four per cent of the student population, they are a visible presence in the school as seen by meeting in the center courtyard between classes, or by sitting together at a lunch table in the cafeteria, or by playing in the soccer fields after school. Their academic activities are centered on their attendance in the ESL classes, their mainstream classes, their participation in extra-curricular activities such as sports, and their presence in and around the open spaces and places of the school environs. Since this school is constructed with a campus-style environment comprised of buildings that are connected by walkways, there are many places that students can congregate as they move from class period to class period. In the next section I describe how the rules and regulations of school policies affected the behavior of Latino ELLs.

School Policies

The high school has very clear policies about its educational goals. The Mission Statement of the *Student Handbook* states:

> The faculty and administrative staff . . . .are committed to their mission of offering a quality education which is compatible with our students' needs and abilities and which addresses the demands of living and working in the Twenty-first century. . . .It is our intention to prepare students with the knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively as responsible citizens of a global community (*Student Handbook,* 2004).

My interview with the principal indicated that the school takes seriously its Mission statement and that she uses the fiscal as well as the educational resources of the whole school to assist the ELLs in general. For example, in this current budget year she received money to supply a remedial math class for ELLs, which includes Latino as well as other non-English speaking students. The goal of the remediation class is to help ELLs understand the academic content using terms and educational strategies that promote comprehension in mathematics.

The Mission statement drives the activities of the school to make it a comprehensive high school to prepare students to live and function as responsible citizens. Part of helping ELLs to learn how to function within the school environs is to have in place a counseling unit that guides their academic work and assists them in discovering future post secondary goals. The counseling unit and its function will be discussed next.

Counseling

Having one guidance counselor for all ELLs was an educational decision to offer quality counseling for Latino ELLs, and to consolidate all counseling efforts. This eliminates confusion

about which counselor a student has to see as he/she progresses through the grades. It also gives the counselor an opportunity to get to know the students on a more personal basis. Part of the role of the guidance counselor is to place students in classes to "work with people who are going to be sympathetic to the fact that they are still developing their language skills," (Principal, Interview).

My interview with the guidance counselor indicated she concurred with the principal's perspective. She stated that the Latino ELLs are coming from other schools that:

> . . . .[Will] determine what they take here, and there are certain academic classes that all students must take. Sometimes if the student is coming in and they don't speak any English, we will recommend a Spanish III, or IV because that is a class where they can feel very successful. (Guidance Counselor, Interview).

There are other classes that Latino ELLs can take according to their levels of interest, such as art, business, architecture, psychology, sociology, horticulture, and many other electives. One innovative school policy adjustment in the curriculum that helps Latino ELLs learn allows teachers of ELLs to enter mainstream core content area classes and to act as a resource for the regular teachers.

> They actually go to the classroom, particularly in courses where English, the lack of English, is going to really hinder the students like sciences. . . .Sciences and health uses a lot of medical terms. . . .So they go to health classes and they actually sit and listen and take notes, or they work with the students while they are in class. (Guidance Counselor. Interview).

From the interviews with the school principal, the guidance counselor, and also the building hall principal, I saw that one strategy for successful entry and academic achievement in the second language was to have a type of "inclusion" model whereby the teachers who teach ELLs worked with content area teachers in the classroom performing very specific roles to assist ELLs with academic English. "Inclusion model" is a term used in Special Education usually to mean the pairing up of general and special education teachers to work together (Byrnes, 2002). The guidance counselor and the principal described the same inclusion term for the teacher who works with ELLs and with the content area teachers. One such inclusion model will be discussed in the section on content area pedagogy, as well as other curricular decisions such as assessment, made in content area classes, which affect the teaching and learning of Latino ELLs.

A significant responsibility of running an effective school is to have an understanding of discipline policies that allow all students to participate successfully in a learning community that addresses their academic and sociocultural needs. In this next section, I address school discipline issues that surfaced throughout my study.

School Discipline Policies

How discipline policies, rules, and regulations of a school are being carried out and how all students understand them and comply with them affects school climate and promotes a positive environment that affects achievement and behavior (American Federation of Teachers, 2004). An aspect of school policy that influenced the behaviors of the Latino ELLs is reflected in a recent incident involving a number of the Latino ELLs during an altercation that erupted between the Latino ELLs and a second generation Latino student who was accompanied by his cohort of English speaking friends. This serious incident resulted in a 10-day suspension of a number of Latino ELLs in this study. The school's *Student Handbook* clearly denotes disciplinary action for inappropriate behavior: "It is expected that all students abide by the STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR as outlined in the student behavior pamphlet provided by the school system" (*Student Handbook*, p. 1).

The school administrator called on a Spanish-speaking member of the faculty to act as an interpreter to mediate the situation regarding the fight between the Latino ELLs and the second generation Latino student, and to act as an interpreter for the students as well as a translator for the parents. The Spanish-speaking teacher was called to translate letters received from parents of the Latino ELLs sent to the administrators. Because of her effectiveness in working with both students and faculty, the school principal is thinking about trying to release her from her teaching duties next year for a period to:

> Act not as a guidance counselor, although that is kind of what it would be. But the students really like her and feel comfortable with her, so that they will have someone that they can go to talk that she can maybe encourage them to become involved in the school (Principal, Interview).

To reiterate issues regarding school policies, Latino ELLs need to be informed about school policies regarding the curriculum and rules that govern both curricular and student behaviors in the school. These should be not only curricular decisions, but, other decisions regarding the functioning of the total school, including discipline issues. A lack of knowledge about the rules necessitates having someone articulate the school rules to them in their language.

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The Latino ELLs felt that person should be someone they respect. These statements indicated their feelings:

> *Ella es la mejor, la más indicada porque es maestra.*
>
> [She is the best, the most qualified because she is a teacher.] (Rosalinda 10th grade)
>
> *Llama a Mrs. Marbella para que abogue.*
>
> [Call Mrs. Marbella so that she will advocate for us.] (Rosalinda 10th grade)

The administrators and faculty concurred, and they actively sought out a Spanish-speaking faculty member to act as bridge-builder of understanding between themselves and the Latino ELLs. As school policies provide guidelines for standards of behavior, so too, extra-curricular activities enhance opportunities for ELLs to interact with English-speaking peers and with members of other ethnic groups. This next section discusses one such opportunity.

Extracurricular Activities

Part of enabling ELLs to adapt to the school setting is to participate in school-wide academic activities and school extra-curricular activities such as sports. The building assistant principal mentioned the importance of having students involved in activities that are important to their personal growth as well as contribute to the spirit of entire school. As an example, he mentioned the school's soccer team in our interview.

> They develop rapport with the students and they get them involved with the students. Say, for instance, this little girl from Colombia. She has an accent, but she was the one that was instrumental in getting a lot of these ELL kids interested in soccer. We didn't have that many kids on the soccer team, and she wanted to play soccer so bad, so she went to the ELL classes and started recruiting. (Assistant Principal, Interview).

I went by the soccer field one afternoon to see the soccer team practice. This is a coed soccer team and the day I was there I saw a Japanese girl and a Colombian girl on the field. The five boys that were there were from different countries in Latin America, Europe, and Africa. Hugo is a member of the soccer team. He told me during one of the interviews that he preferred to be on the soccer team so that we would not have to get into trouble. This afternoon, he was a little late getting to the playing field, and team was practicing getting ready for a game the next day. It was a chilly afternoon and the team was going through practice motions of kicking the ball across the field and running around the track.

The girls were very active and running around the field and kicking the ball. I thought they seemed to play well with the boys, however, since I know nothing about soccer, I could not

tell whether there were any gender differences regarding the plays (Field notes). They were getting ready for a match the following day. Hugo told me that they never win matches, but he still likes to be on the team. I noticed that Mario was not on the field, and I remembered something he told me about not feeling good playing with girls on the team because they could not go against big guys. He stated:

> *No es que sea machista…no podemos jugar, ese es un problema que tenemos, que meten a las mujeres. Y nosotros vamos con. . .vatos [slang for dude] que son grandes y ellas no les van a poner un pie a un vato que es grande. . .El año pasado teníamos un equipo casi perfecto, casi todos latinos que podían jugar, pero el* coach *metía a las mujeres. . . Debe haber un equipo solo para las mujeres.*
>
> [It's not that I'm a machista, [a male chauvinist]. . . we couldn't play. . .that's the problem that we have, that they put girls on the team, and we're going against big dudes, the [girls] are not going to put their feet on a big dude. . .Last year we had an almost perfect team, almost everyone was a Latino who could play, but the coach put in the girls. . . . There should be a team for girls only.] *(Mario 9ᵗʰ grade)

Even though Mario does not consider himself a '*machista,'* an aggressive male with an exaggerated sense of masculinity, it appeared that he did not want to have girls on the team because he felt they weren't strong enough to tackle big boys. The coach of the soccer team is in favor of having girls on the team and has no problems incorporating them fully into the team. He is a first year teacher at the school who brings to the team a lot of experience, having played in college and in Latin American leagues. When I spoke to him he was hopeful that they might win the next game (Field notes).

Mario and Hugo have involved themselves in extra-curricular activities that led them to have contacts with other students outside of their content area classes, and to have cross-cultural relationships with students of other ethnic groups. Even though they may not agree with the decision of the coach to add females to the team, they enjoyed the camaraderie of the other members of the team. Hugo said that it also gave him something to do after school and kept him out of trouble.

Summary of Extra Curricular Activities

To sum up this section on extra curricular activities, Latino ELLs who participated in extra-curricular activities expanded their ability to learn new knowledge and skills. Latino ELLs were able to move outside of their immediate zone of the ESL and mainstream classrooms, and

created opportunities for negotiating second language conversations and communications with native English speakers in informal settings. Lastly, participating in sports clubs enabled Latino ELLs to develop interpersonal skills and social relationships with diverse learners.

In the previous section I have shown how participating in extra curricular activities allows ELL Latino students to interact in a more informal manner with their peers and to use their English speaking skills in the social and comfortable settings of team sports. In the next section I describe how leadership roles and achieving academic excellence help to reinforce positive messages that impacts school climate.

Academic and Mentoring Leadership Roles

An opportunity to serve, as a role model for other ELLs, as well as non-Latino students, is to see positive engagement of Latino ELLs in academic and leadership roles. An opportunity to exercise leadership roles was discussed by one ELL mainstream student who is an avid tennis player and is in the Tennis Club. She is currently the number two player on the team. She hoped that she might get a tennis scholarship, but this has not materialized. One extra-curricular activity she wanted to participate in was to be a peer counselor or judge at the Forum.

This is a peer review body of students who examine wrongdoing by other students and give sanction to the students brought to the Forum. She was disappointed that her schedule did not permit her to participate.

Es un jurado de estudiantes, pero me quita mucho tiempo.

[It's a peer-review court, but it takes too much time from me.] (Julie, 12th grade)

Her discussion with me about wanting to be a participant in this forum, in order to use her English language skills, indicates to me that she feels confident in assuming this leadership role among her native English speaking peers. Another way that Julie saw to take on a leadership role with her peers was to become a mentor for new ELL Latino students by helping them adjust to the school and their new classes. She stated:

Sí mi counselor *siempre me llama para que lleve a los* new *students que no hablan inglés a sus nuevas clases.*

[Yes, my counselor always calls me to take the new students that don't speak English to their new classes.] (Julie, 12th grade)

Julie felt good that she was called to be one of the mentors for the new ELLs. Just as Julie felt empowered by participating in activities that helped to show her social leadership dimensions, so too, is it empowering for Latino ELLs to feel acknowledged for their academic

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excellence. In this next section, I describe how the overall school climate is enhanced by acknowledging the academic excellence of Latino ELLs.

Academic Excellence

Public acknowledgement of the skills and abilities of ELLs shows the school community that Latino ELLs are adept at achieving academic excellence. Graciela, one of the Latina ELL mainstream students was acknowledged in the 10ᵗʰ grade as being an outstanding student after being in the United States less than two years. She was thrilled to hear her name announced over the loudspeaker, acknowledged as one of the outstanding students for her grade.

An example of outstanding academic work is being able to join the International Baccalaureate (IB) class. Julie is in the Spanish IB class, that means that she is in a class where students in the IB program take classes and receive advanced credit for college. Although Julie was not in the full IB program, being in IB Spanish class was a distinct honor, and she was acknowledged in the graduation program.

Through these brief examples, I have shown how Latino ELLs became visible to the entire school community by participating in mentoring leadership roles and by receiving academic recognition that was publicly acknowledged. It enhanced the school climate not only for Latino ELLs in particular, also for all learners in the school.

Summary of School Climate

To conclude the section on school climate, commentary by administrators and faculty members see school policy, discipline policy, extracurricular activities, and leadership mentoring roles as important elements in making a school function within a framework of safety and educational engagement. Latino ELLs, who participated in active engagement in extracurricular activities, and taking on mentoring and leadership roles, had opportunities to:

- extend themselves outside of the classroom by interacting with members of the wider school community;
- act as role models for other Latinos and non-Latino students;
- be acknowledged for academic excellence;
- seek trusted faculty members to support and advocate for them.

However, Latino ELLs who were unfamiliar with school policies, or who engaged in behaviors that were counterproductive to their life in the school, needed to connect with individuals they trusted to help them sort out these issues. Mitra (2004) states that students have

unique perspectives about their schools that adults cannot fully replicate. The administrators and Spanish-faculty member were building bridges of communication with Latino ELLs in an effort to improve discourse about school climate.

In the following section I discuss another organizing principle of the contextual framework, racial and ethnic identity influencing behavior in the school setting and how it forms an interconnecting relationship with school climate.

Racial and Ethnic Identity

The concept of Latino-ness at this school is tied to two factors: their racial and ethnic identity, and their use of Spanish language in the public spaces of the school and in the classrooms (Nieto, 2002; Suarez-Orozco & Paéz, 2002). As mentioned previously Latino ELLs in this study come from various countries in the Spanish-speaking world and thus have ethnic and political identity related to their home countries. They are Mexican, or Honduran, or Puerto Rican, first, and then they are Latinos. Table 3.1 indicates their countries of origin as well as other information regarding their grade status in the school. The table indicates the number of years they have been in this country, their native country, and what level of proficiency they have in English. A number of students are also working part time and for two Latino ELLs, are working almost full time in fast food restaurants. The question of racial and ethnic identity is an important issue for Latino ELLs because it situates them in a cultural sphere in their home countries, and now in the new host country, they have to interact with other Latinos as well as with students of other ethnic and racial backgrounds. The adaptation to the new setting, as well as interactions with students of other ethnic groups, may create inter- as well as intra-ethnic culture clashes and may conflict with schooling experiences.

In this section I describe incidents and events that have an impact on the ethnic identity and the learning environment of the high school for the Latino ELLs:

- Ethnic identity and diversity;
- Puerto Rican identity;
- Interracial conflict;
- Latinos *Unidos.*

Ethnic Identity and Diversity

The Latino ELLs in this study come from different countries, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. As such they have different perspectives about

their own cultural identity. In their home countries they were Mexicano, Cubano, Salvadoreño, Hondureño, Colombiano, and Puertorriqueño. Here in the United States, there is a tendency to categorize all Latinos or Hispanics as one. This may be the result of the Census Bureau's designation in 1980 of Hispanics as one category (Rodríguez, 2000). The majority of ELL Latinos in this school are of Mexican origin. Many of the non-Latino students in this school are not aware of the differences in ethnic identity, and tend to think of all Latinos in the school as Mexican. This infuriated one of the Latina mainstream students who blurted out to an African American student:

We are not all the same! (Julie, 12th grade)

She then took out a map of North and South America and pointed to the different countries, including her home country of Colombia, to the surprise of the other student. This perception that all of the Latino students in this school are of Mexican origin provides some taunting and name-calling by members of non-Latino ethnic or racial groups in the school especially while congregating in the open spaces of the schools, like the lunchroom, and the open court yards. It seemed most prevalent with the younger Latino ELLs, and focused primarily on the young men. In the intermediate focus group, the Latino boys commented about some of these issues that provoke anger or possible reactions that may led to conflict. They stated that they have had all kinds of conflicts.

Pero nosotros hemidos[3] tenido all kind of problems*. . . peleas y todo eso.*

[But we have had all kinds of problems. . . fights and things like that.] (Mario, 9th grade)

Porque somos latinos y todo eso.

[Because we are Latinos and stuff like that.] (Manuel, 9th grade)

When I asked about a specific incident, they commented on the fact that other white students would call them wetbacks as they were walking to the lunchroom or around the building.

Pero uno tampoco va a dejar que lo insulten. . . .Que te llamen wetbacks *y todo eso. . . .Y uno no se va a dejar que ellos. . .le echen. . .lo miren más pequeño a uno.*

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[3] The participant is speaking non-standard Spanish. I have transcribed the students' discourse in Spanish and have not attempted to alter or correct their Spanish in any way. I have accepted their speech discourse and follow Zentella's (1997) admonition that a key ingredient to learning a language is allowing students to speak more frequently and accepting a variety of dialects.

[But neither is one going to let people insult you. . . .To call you wetbacks and everything like that. . . .And we're not going to let them. . . . To "diss us" [slang for disrespect]. . .and to look down on us] (Mario and Manuel, Focus group interview, 9th grade)

A veces nos también se burlan por la comida . . . . Una vez este también yo y él íbamos caminando por allá y estaban unos muchachos blancos y tenían una guitarra y empezaron a cantar burlándose. . .que tacos y enchiladas y que quesadillas. . .y no sé que tanto empezaron a gritar.

[Some times they make fun of us because of our food. . . .Once he and I were walking over there [pointing to another building] and there were some white kids with a guitar and they started teasing us and singing, tacos, enchiladas, and quesadillas. . . . and I don't know what else, they started to scream.] (Mario and Manuel, 9th grade)

Estaban cantando ellos, pero estaban . . . .cada vez que nosotros pasábamos.

[They were singing, they were. . . .Every time that we passed (Mario and Manuel, 9th grade)

When I probed further about their feelings and how they handled the situation, they stated:

Ignorándolos. . .ignorando todo eso. . .Pero a veces que llegan al punto y lo enojan a uno.

[Ignoring them. Ignoring all of that. . . .But there are times when they reach the point at which you get angry] *(*Mario y Manuel, 9th grade)

For these young men a mechanism for not getting into trouble is to ignore the situations; however, the boiling point is still a step away from getting into major conflict with any person or group who disrespects their identity by using stereotypical comments. The anger is always below the surface.

Puerto Rican Identity

One of the other Latino ELL mainstream students, a Puerto Rican, commented on issues regarding identity and interracial conflicts. He gets along with the African American and Jamaican peers in the school and has an African American girl friend that attends another high school. He attributes that to his love of Reggae music, and being comfortable around African Americans because many Puerto Ricans consider themselves of mixed race, causing them to be more comfortable associating with persons of color. He does not feel that there are many

discriminatory problems between the African Americans and himself, but there are with the Mexicans. He said:

> *[La discriminación] por los morenos no ha sido mucho porque los morenos saben quién son los boricuas [Puerto Ricans] y eso y nos conocen mucho más a nosotros y saben como bregamos. . . .Pero con los blanquitos que más aun. . .los morenos se llevan mucho conmigo. Con los mexicanos, ellos discriminan más y eso así, pero conmigo. . .como yo soy del caribe, y como ellos saben que la raza boricua que tienen también la raza africana.*
>
> [The discrimination by the African Americans has not been a whole lot, because they know who the *Boricuas* [Indigenous name for Puerto Ricans] are, and they know us a lot more and how we deal. . . .But the whites even more so. . .with the Mexicans, they [African Americans] discriminate more than with me. . .since I am from the Caribbean, and since they know that the *Boricua* race also has African roots.] (Ismael, 12th grade)

Ismael's comfortableness in communicating with African American students stem from his ability to cross borders, to date an African American girl, and the enjoyment of cross-cultural musical expressions like Reggae. Ismael's response to the African American students in this school corresponds to acculturation or culture changes resulting from contact with different groups. Acculturation may lead to the addition of new traits or a fusion of new and old ways (Gibson, 2002). His enjoyment of Reggae, Reggaetón, Hip Hop, and other music fusion cemented an identity with his African American friends in the school. Ismael was very comfortable with his African American friends, as they were with him therefore; there were minimal problems in his interactions with them.

However, in my discussions with him about discrimination and discriminatory practices, he mentioned several incidents in which he had to jump into situations, which resulted in his getting a 10-day school suspension the previous year.

> *Bueno, aquí ha habido mucho problemas mucha discriminación con latinos. . . .Y como somos de otros países, y América, como supuestamente la nación más grande, se creen que son superiores a nosotros . . . .Y pueden hacer lo que les da la gana.*
>
> [Well, there have been a lot of problems of discrimination with Latinos. . . .And since we come from other countries, and America, supposedly the biggest nation, they [native English speakers] think they are superior to us and can do whatever they want.] (Ismael, 12th grade)

As a result of some incidents, especially those when he was speaking Spanish and the other boys thought they were speaking about them; he stated that he had to stand up and defend other Latino students, who were Mexican, against people from other ethnic groups. He said:

> *Y este año fue con los mexicanos. . . . Como ellos no sabían inglés.*
>
> *Pues yo daba cara por ellos y le decía a los muchachos que no se metieran en problemas y eso así.*
>
> [This year it was with the Mexicans. . . .Since they don't speak English. Well I would stick my neck out for them, and I would tell the guys not to get in trouble and things like that.] (Ismael, 12th grade)

He would *dar la cara,* [Literal translation, give face] or stand-up and defend other Latino students. He felt an obligation to his younger Latino friends to stand-up to their detractors, as well as to be like a mentor by telling them not to get into trouble.

Summary of Racial and Ethnic Identity

Racial and ethnic identity of Latino ELLs was an important facet of student engagement and participation in the learning environment. Latino participants had very strong views about their uniqueness and influenced aspects of the school's sociocultural environment. To summarize the points about ethnic identity:

- ELL Latino participants in this study came from different Spanish-speaking countries and cultural backgrounds,
- different cultural backgrounds were not apparent to the mainstream students in this school,
- perception by native English speakers that all Latino students were of Mexican origin disconcerted some Latino students who want to maintain their unique ethnic and cultural identity,
- Latino ELL student who crossed cultural and ethnic borders with African American students was able to build bridges of friendships through music, dance, and identification of similar racial characteristics, and
- conflicts and teasing by other groups towards Latino ELLs provoked anger in some students and led to verbal confrontations.

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A strategy of ignoring comments often averted potential problems between the Latino ELLs and other students. However, there were pressure points where they could not be ignored and led to potential problems.

In the next section, I describe one such incident among Latino males, Latina females, and African American males and females. This incident was tied to a situation regarding male female relationships, and the reactive perception of the Latino males to protect the Latina female are discussed in the following section.

Interracial Conflict

This incident involving one of the intermediate Latina ELLs in the school cafeteria told to me by Ana, an intermediate ELL student, during our individual interview. The Latino ELL boys also corroborated it during the intermediate focus group discussion. A group of African American boys approached Ana in the lunchroom where she was eating with her friends and asked her in English if she was a virgin. She thought she had no reason to answer them, and replied in a loud voice while pushing the boys, "I don't want to talk to you!"

> *Sí, esos morenos. . . . No, de hablar. . .porque a mí y a mi amiga nos preguntaban `si*
> *éramos vírgenes, y no teníamos por qué contestar, y se sentaban cerca de nosotros y yo*
> *los empujé y le dije: "yo no quiero hablar contigo."*
> [Yes, those Blacks, no, to speak about it, because they asked me and my
> friend if we were virgins, and we didn't have to answer them, and they sat next to us, and
> I pushed them and I said: "I don't want to speak with you." (Ana 9th grade)
> *Eran 2 muchachos. . no sé y se fueron para donde unas muchachas morenitas y me*
> *fueron a gritar que porque no había pellizcado o le había pegado a su hermano y yo sólo*
> *le dije que no hablara conmigo, porque, ¿Qué son esas preguntas? Y con eso me peleé*
> *yo con la morena, pues porque tampoco voy a dejar que llegue a gritar.*
> [Then the boys went to some Black girls and they came back at me screaming saying that
> I had pinched the boy who was her brother, and I only told her not to speak with me
> because, what kind of questions are those? And with that I fought with the girl, because I
> am not going to let her come over to me start screaming!]
> (Ana, 9th grade)

The situation escalated when the Latino boys came to help. Mario and Manuel came to the rescue and told the girls to go to their classes. Ana continued telling me the rest of the story:

Entonces llegaron otros mexicanos y me defendieron, y me dijeron que nos fuéramos a las clases y nos fuimos pero a la media hora nos llamaron por la bocina. . .que fuera yo a la Main Office*, porque estábamos todos en problemas.*

[Then a few other Mexicans arrived and they defended me and told us that we should go to the classes, and we went, but within half an hour, they called us through the loud speaker and to the Main Office because we were all in trouble.]

(Ana, 9th grade)

The boys went over to leave their book bags in the parking lot and it appeared that the other boys were going in the same direction towards them. Fortunately, a girl's basketball coach came by at that moment and intervened, and the potential fight was diffused. However, the verbal abuses continued with these same African American boys, who went into one of the classes and started screaming at the Latino boys just the day before this interview with Ana, which was conducted in April.

Summary of Interracial Conflict

In conclusion, interracial conflicts have occasionally flared up between Latino ELLs and African American students. I chose to illustrate one such conflict between an intermediate ELL female Latina student and an African American youth because of the pivotal role of the male Latino ELLs in intervening in a possible insecure situation and also to show their role as male protectors of the female students. It also speaks to the discussion of sex as a private matter that is not to be discussed publicly. As relative newcomers to the school, the ELL Latino males are asserting their ethnic and cultural identity and their ability to assist Latina girls should any personal situations arise that they perceive as dangerous. The Latinas welcomed their help and felt the Latino males defended them.

A part of the socialization process of the school environment is how to fit into the school culture. ELL Latinos have chosen to meet and congregate around the school grounds, speak Spanish, and socialize with their fellow Latinos, during class breaks as well as in the morning and before heading home at the end of the school day and have formed a distinctive group. In the next section I discuss how the aspects of ethnic identity, language use, and a socially constructed environment converge into forming what Latino ELLs call themselves as *Latinos Unidos*, [United Latinos].

Latinos Unidos, [United Latinos]

In both focus group interviews, the intermediate and the advanced group of Latino ELLs animatedly expressed their participation in-group gatherings before and after school, and during the change of classes as a positive sociocultural activity that was misunderstood by others. Here are some of the comments that were emphasized strongly throughout the interviews with me on several occasions and repeated in the individual interviews.

Somos unidos.

[We're united.] (Intermediate, advanced/mainstream, ELL focus group interviews)

No somos una ganga[4].

[We're not a gang.] (Intermediate and advanced, focus group interviews)

The Latino ELLs congregate around the school courtyard near the Main Office and in front of the school's Media Center at several points during the school day. Most of the Latinos that congregate there are the newer ELLs who are in the beginning, intermediate, or advanced classes. They go in the morning when they get off the busses, around 8:00 a.m., and they are there during the class changes, as well as before they go home in the afternoon at the end of the school day.

Es como un magneto que hay allí que todos llegan ahí.

[It's like a magnet that's there, where everyone comes there.] (Rosalinda, 10th grade)

Nos reunimos enfrente de la librería* en el break.

[We get together in front of the library during the break.] (Mario, 9th grade)

[*The student was using non-standard Spanish, or Spanglish, to indicate library, not bookstore, which is the standard Spanish word for *librería*].

The Latino ELLs seek each other out. This is especially true during the class changes because so many are in mainstream classes where there are few Latinos, and they are the only ones in classes with all native English speakers. The Latinos who are no longer in the ESL program and are in full mainstream classes generally do not join them during the class change. Rosalinda, who is in the advanced ESL class, captured the sentiment of many when she said:

Creo que uno se busca porque uno no habla con nadie.

[I think that one seeks each other out because one doesn't speak with anyone.]

(Rosalinda, 10th grade)

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[4] The student was using Spanglish, *ganga*, for gang. *Ganga* is the Spanish word for bargain.

Sí nosotros tenemos un grupito allí, siempre nos paramos al día.

[Yes, we have a small group there, and we stopped there during the day.] (Hugo, 10th grade)

The visibility of the Latino ELLs in the courtyard and in the lunchroom at times create confusion for other students who see them congregating in a group.

We are not a gang. Because the ELL Latino students are so visible in the courtyard, some groups may mistake them for a gang. From my conversations with the Latino ELL group they are not involved in activities outside of the school that appear to be gang related. I did not see any specific tattoos, nor did I see them wear all wearing specific colors that might be identified as gang-related symbols that would distinguish them as gang members. Another distinctive marker belonging to a Latino group, but not a gang, is that a number of Latino males will have their hair cut a distinctive way, and shave their beards around the jaw line. Teachers and administrators see the distinctiveness of Latino ELLs in their groups. Segments of an interview with the assistant principal bear this out.

> As far as the ELLs in the rest of the population, they tend to support them as well. They have, the ELL kids sort of gather together. But they are willing to accept an outreached hand from the other kids if they want to, you know, hang out with them or communicate or just from some of the classes that are mainstreamed, basically your upper level, ELL kids. The basic [Latino ELLs] gather together a little more because they are not as, I am not going to say open, but they don't know the English language. They are not comfortable. . . .with their [English] language. . . . So, they feel more comfortable coming together. Yes, they congregate right outside of the cafeteria or near the library. And they are outside in the open, and they tend to have spats between themselves that develop off campus. . . .We had one situation. . . .So he came back to school that next day to basically take care of business and there were five or six of them involved. (Assistant Principal, Interview).

Conflicts that had roots outside of the school environment simmered within the school's environment. I relate the situation in the next segment.

Mexican and Mexican American: Inter-Ethnic Conflict

The situational 'spat' turned out to be a full-blown fight in the courtyard between ELL Latinos, a Mexican-American student, and other white students accompanying the Mexican-American that I described earlier in this chapter in my interview with the school principal.

Continuing my interview with the assistant principal about the school altercation in the courtyard and the suspension of the five or six students involved, he commented that they needed an interpreter because there were certain situations where there was a need for a professional on staff to help mediate the situation. He commented:

> And we have a person on staff. . . .And she is the person they can confide in when they
> have a situation. . . .So we use her as a mediator (Assistant Principal, Interview).

Latino Distinctive Characteristics

It appears from the recent altercation in the courtyard, that Latino ELLs also stand out not only because of using their native Spanish language in courtyard, but because a number of them exhibit distinctive personal grooming features in haircuts and beards. For example, they shave their hair very close, and leave spaces between lines, to make a row, not necessarily cornrows as used in African American hairstyles. The beards are very thin lines of hair around the jaw line. These distinctive markers of their Latino-ness at times conflict with second generation Latinos or second generation Mexicans born here who are English dominant speakers. This inter-intra-ethnic confrontation between Mexicans and Mexican Americans is reflected in certain stereotypical comments from the Mexican Americans towards the Latino ELLs. Hugo commented that these second-generation Mexican guys spoke in derogatory manner about them, the ELL Latinos, saying such things as:

> *Porque antes hablaba de nosotros de la forma que nos vestíamos, que mojados, que*
> *somos feos . . . . y del peinado que nosotros traíamos..*
> [Because some times they spoke about the way we dressed, we were wetbacks, we're
> ugly, and about the haircuts we wore.] (Hugo, 10th grade)
> *Casi todos los latinos tenemos el peinado unas rayitas. .*
> [Almost all of us Latinos wear our hair with little lines] (Hugo, 10th grade)

The other guys that the ELL group fought with also commented about their haircuts as being a gay thing. Hugo said:

> *Que el peinado de gays también.*
> [The hairstyle was also a gay thing.] (Hugo, 10th grade)

It appears that there is definite conflict between Latino ELLs and those students who are of Latino/Mexican-American backgrounds, but are considered more Americanized, than those who are recent arrivals. Mario points out:

Los que hablan perfectamente inglés casi no se llevan con nosotros

[Those who speak perfect English hardly ever get along with us.] (Mario, 9th grade)

Mario is quick to point out that they are not a gang. Again, he reiterated to me his relationship with other members of the group.

Somos bien unidos. . . .Latinos unidos. No somos gangas, ni nada de eso. . . .la gente aquí dicen que somos gangas. . . . Pero no somos gangas. . . solo que estamos unidos. [We are very united. . .Latinos united. We're not a gang or anything like that. The people here say that we're a gang. . . .But we're not a gang, only that we are united.] (Mario, 9th grade)

These statements by Mario and by Hugo about their visibility in the courtyard lead to these observations on my part regarding their appearance as a distinctive group of Latino English language learners:

- Potential rivalry between the more assimilated group of second generation Mexican-Americans, and this group of ELL Latinos triggers intra-racial conflict.

- Latino ELLs' desire to meet and speak their own language during change of periods or other times during the school day provides important social and cultural connections that distinguish them from the members of the rest of the school.

- Distinguishing physical characteristics as displayed in haircuts are a marker of maintaining their identity and culture.

- Latino ELLs did not have any visible tattoos that would indicate they are members of a gang, nor did they wear any distinctive colors associated with gang membership.

Summary of Ethnic Identity, Interracial Conflict, and Latinos Unidos

To summarize the section on ethnic identity and interracial conflict, a number of issues surfaced related to the sociocultural aspect of the school environment. Primarily the younger Latino ELLs came together and bonded with other Latinos in the ESL classes in the informal atmosphere of the school and outside of the classrooms. This openness became both an opportunity and a challenge to other ethnic groups in the school. It was an opportunity to meet and socialize for newer Latino ELLs, and also a challenge when other groups surfaced and vied for power and attention. Here are some of the findings:

- Latino ELL male students felt compelled to come to the aid of the Latina girls when interracial conflict erupted.

- Tensions that arose between ethnic groups, created an uncomfortable school climate, led to a stressful learning environment for some Latinas.

- Visibility of *Latinos Unidos* [United Latinos] to speak Spanish alienated some students, including second generation Latinos.

- Inter-ethnic rivalry between two groups of Latinos exacerbated additional conflict and provoked further disciplinary action for Latino ELLs.

- Male members of *Latinos Unidos* remained united in their efforts exert their ethnic and cultural identity in distinctive manner by wearing unique hairstyles.

- Latinos and Latinas felt drawn to come together in the courtyard during class breaks to socialize and speak Spanish.

Summary of Chapter Four

I have explored three organizing principles as having an impact on teaching and learning a second language for Latino ELLs: (1) adaptation to a new setting, (2) school climate, and (3) racial and ethnic identity. All of these are associated with sociocultural aspects of learning and coping with the acculturation processes. These sociocultural markers under gird the educational facets of learning a second language and have a strong bearing on the academic component of being in the high school for Latino ELLs. To summarize the salient features of this chapter:

- Adapting to a new setting proved disconcerting for some students because of the ecological climatic and livable space changes.

- Adapting to a school culture was traumatic for some due to curricular changes and adjustments to the school system in the United States.

- Speaking English in public became a source of embarrassment for some Latino ELLs and precipitated behaviors of attendance skipping classes.

- Participating in school extra-curricular activities created opportunities for interaction with students of other ethnic and racial backgrounds, encouraged conversational speaking in English and increased socialization.

- Acknowledging academic excellence publicly became a rewarding experience for Latino ELLs and showing the school community the academic potential of newcomers.

- Consolidating counseling efforts assisted Latino ELLs connect with faculty and administrators oversee their academic progress.

- Participating in conflictive situations with member of other ethnic groups and second-generation Latinos lead to disciplinary problems for some Latino ELLs.

- Maintaining their language and cultural traits alive through speaking Spanish and displaying physical characteristics of their unique Latino-ness were important attributes of their racial and ethnic identity.

- Keeping Latino diversity alive was important for ELLs to feel as unique persons with their own ethnic and cultural identity.

In the next chapter I describe the organizing principles regarding teaching and learning for Latino ELLs. They are:

- Policies in place for NCLB Act and Latino ELLs,

- Strategies for success in second language acquisition classes,

- Transformative pedagogy in the ESL classroom, and

- Responsive practices of caring teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE

Findings: Teaching and Learning Environment for Latino ELLs

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

In the previous chapter I discussed the sociocultural factors that affected the teaching and learning environment of the Latino English language learners (ELLs). In this chapter I examine the policies, pedagogy, and practices that affect teaching and learning from the perspective of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001). Additionally, I examine the pedagogy of mainstream and ESL classroom teachers, and the practices *caring* teachers' use to help Latino ELLs succeed academically in the environment of an urban high school. Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them " (p. 29). Culturally responsive teaching can be integrated into all aspects of the teaching curriculum. The curriculum is comprehensive, affirms student diversity, and gives legitimacy to students' voices in creating an equitable and just society (Gay, 2000, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). I examine the findings of my classroom observations, as well as interviews with faculty and administrators, and Latino ELLs to uncover challenges and opportunities to assist Latino ELLs succeed academically using their second language acquisition skills. My findings are presented in the following areas:

- Policies in place for NCLB Act and Latino ELLs,
- Strategies for success in second language acquisition classes,
- Transformative pedagogy in the ESL classroom, and
- Responsive practices of caring teachers.

Policies in Place for NCLB Act and Latino ELLs

The policies of the NCLB Act continue to manifest an overarching presence in the education of ELLs Latinos in the nation and state as I discussed in my review of the literature in chapter 2. In this section I highlight how the state, the school division, and the high school are complying with NCLB mandates in terms of how they affect teaching and learning for ELLs. Although the provisions of the NCLB Act do not specify teaching approaches to assist ELLs attainment of English proficiency and development of high levels of academic achievement, the goal of teaching ELLs is to have them exit ESL programs and move into regular mainstream classes, regardless of the methodology employed to achieve this goal.

Virginia's Department of Education and NCLB

NCLB is implemented in Virginia by adhering to the rules set by the federal government and carried out by Virginia's Department of Education. All ELLs in grades 9-12 at proficiency levels of 1-4, and those who are in their first year of enrollment in a school in the United States must take all parts of the English language proficiency assessment, which includes listening, speaking, reading and writing. ELLs who are in the Monitor 1 and Monitor 2 status (those who exit the ESL program) must take the reading and writing components of the English language proficiency assessment. ELLs enrolled in courses that have end-of-course assessments, such as Standards of Learning (SOLs), must take the end-of-course assessments for the content area (VDOE, 2006).

In January 2005, Virginia's Department of Education (VDOE) requested a waiver from the federal government regarding assessment procedures for ELLs. The basis of this request was to give a reprieve of from one to three years to test ELLs and to count as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). That request was denied in an August 2005 memorandum to State Board of Education (VDOE, 2005). The policies and regulations of NCLB continue to be in place.

School Division's Implementation of NCLB and Programs for ELLs

It is the responsibility of the school division to monitor all programs for ELLs and to provide the appropriate English language assistance program as well as implementing the policies of the federal government and the mandates of the Virginia's Department of Education. This school division has chosen a pullout English as a Second Language educational approach for all ELLs. A pullout program is one in which ELLs are in an ESL program for a portion of the school day and then are mainstreamed into regular classes for the rest of the day. The program is under the supervision of the Coordinator of Foreign Language and English Language Learners (ELL)[5] program and is responsible for coordination and supervision of programs in each school site. This person is the liaison with Virginia's Department of Education and the school division. My interview with the coordinator of ELL programs focused of the NCLB Act and its implementation in the school division. Highlights from my interviews are as follows:

- There are 21 elementary schools with ELLs, six middle schools, and two high schools with ELLs.

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[5] This school division refers to ESL programs as ELL programs and the ESL teacher as the ELL teacher. It also refers to the ESL classroom as the ELL classroom. These terms are used interchangeably in this chapter.

- *The English Language Learners Plan Book (2002)* developed by the school division outlines all steps to be followed from initial identification to monitoring students once they are no longer in the program.
- Once ELLs exit the program and move into mainstream classes, ESL teachers continue to monitor them for two additional years. Students may be reintegrated into the ESL program if they are not doing well in mainstream classes (ELL Coordinator Interview).

In order to add to the body of knowledge and evidence for ELLs' academic success, the school division began, in 2005, to maintain information on students who are no longer being monitored as ELLs; in this way they created a new category of students now being called Former Limited English Proficient Students (FLEPS). Information collected is for the school division and will be analyzed to see how well the former ELLs are progressing in regular classes (ELL Coordinator, Interview).

Another responsibility of the coordinator of ELL programs is oversight of the budget allocated for the school division. The categories for the appropriation about how to use the funding vary according to the needs of the entire school division. Some examples of categories for which funds may be used are: staff development, attendance at professional conferences, bringing professional speakers to the school division, and purchasing educational supplies and books. The school division's ELL coordinator also examines a number of innovative design options to strengthen the ELL program. One such innovation is to consider the creation of an Intake Center that could serve as a place for special classes for ELLs or to offer remediation classes in science, social studies or math, and where ELLs would get half credit of Carnegie Unit towards graduation. These remediation classes would be for level I beginning ELLs who come into the high schools without a background in math or science, or other core subjects like social studies. The rationale for these special classes is that the lack of the ELLs academic English proficiency puts them at a disadvantage with native English speakers. The coordinator stated: "Putting them into a regular algebra, or a biology class, and you are setting them up for failure because they are going to fail" (ELL Coordinator, Interview).

Another idea that has captured the coordinator's interest is trying to get teachers to learn about academic reading and using a reading program that teaches "the kids how to read and learn about the academic vocabulary that goes with it." The coordinator is interested in learning more about exemplary programs such as one in Illinois that incorporates a language lab for parents and

students to learn together. Reaching out and developing partnerships with various agencies outside of the school division such as the libraries, the city government, and tapping into sources of funding that help ELLs is a high priority in the coordinator's work. As part of her professional research activities to learn what school divisions with similar Latino ELL populations are doing, she visited school divisions with large Latino ELLs, such as Fairfax and Prince William Counties Public Schools in Virginia, to see what best practices they are using that could be used as models for her division. She adopted some materials for the basic math remediation program currently implemented at the high school where this research took place. Finally, she is working with Virginia Tech's Higher Education Center in Green Valley and a consortium of faculty and school division partners to develop long range plans for educating ELLs. This partnership has potential for success because Virginia Tech's School of Education has employed additional faculty with expertise in second language acquisition.

While these educational programs are implemented to conform to NCLB policies by assisting ELLs to become proficient in English and to transition to English only classes, many issues regarding how to develop best programs for reporting educational progress remain a challenge for educators and policymakers alike. In the following section, I describe criticism of one of the major provisions of NCLB as stated by the division coordinator of the ELL program.

Criticism of NCLB Act in Virginia

One major criticism of NCLB as it is currently implemented involves issues related to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Students who have been in the country one year or less will be able to take an English language proficiency assessment, to determine how well they know the language. The school can use the Stanford English Language Proficiency (SELP) test as a proxy for English language proficiency. The following year ELLs have to be tested in reading and writing, and mathematics. The division ELL coordinator stated:

> I am sure everybody realizes there is no way in one year they can adequately learn. . . . I mean being a language teacher. . . .How do they think they can become proficient, but to get the academic vocabulary that they need to pass any SOL?" (ELL Coordinator, Interview).

The ELL division coordinator highlighted not only one of the major criticisms of the law, but she was also quick to point out the extraordinary positive efforts of ESL teachers to carry out

the pedagogical program. To highlight the point regarding the ELL program and the work of the ESL teachers, the ELL coordinator emphatically stated:

> The ESL teachers in the city are the best! We don't hold a candle to what the ELL [teachers] do. I mean they go to their homes, they find clothing for them, they find out what their needs are, they go and pick them up to take them to functions. They go more than the extra mile. I am very impressed. (ELL Coordinator, Interview).

Summary of School Division's NCLB Activities

To summarize the school division's responsibilities for the ELL program, the coordinator of ELL and foreign language programs has the major task of:

- overseeing the ELL program for the school division and for maintaining communication between teachers, principals, school administrators, and the Virginia Department of Education;

- adhering to NCLB mandates and working with the VDOE to ensure compliance with all policy regulations;

- reaching out to professional organizations, school districts, institutions of higher education to review and research promising pedagogical practices;

- becoming a spokesperson to the public at large for articulating the educational needs of second language learners.

In the next section, I discuss aspects of NCLB that impact teaching and learning of Latino ELLs and how the program is implemented in the high school where I conducted my research.

High School's Implementation of NCLB Activities for Latino ELLs

This school has been fully accredited for the last two years. My questions regarding how Latino ELLs are included in the overall NCLB plan of the school was answered in my interview with school principal. She stated:

> All students are required, including all ELLs as well, unless they are excluded by the way of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), to test for SOLs. For the ELLs, they can be tested in smaller groups, and we allow their teachers to administer the test, but they are still required to take the test and they still have to meet those requirements for graduation (Principal, Interview).

At the high school level the teacher of ELLs is responsible for the ESL program as well as carrying out testing activities and monitoring follow up of ELLs who are in regular

mainstream classes. The following assessment and monitoring activities were carried out by the ESL teacher in the spring: (1) The Stanford English Language Proficiency Test (Stanford ELP, 2005) was given in April, 2005 to former ELLs, who are currently mainstreamed and classified as Monitor 1 and 2 status, and not receiving direct services. All other students currently in the ESL program also took the SELP test in April 2005. (2) The ESL teacher also monitored the academic progress of former ELLs now in mainstream classes during or at the end of every nine-week reporting period. In order to exit the ESL program and reassign the ELL into Monitor I mainstream classes, English proficiency tests, guidance counselor and teacher recommendations must be made. In addition to the SELP test, the teacher administers the Test of Proficiency, ITP (Ballard & Tighe, 2003) and reviews the results of citywide tests. The guidance counselor must also recommend placement into a full mainstream program.

Latino ELLs are fully aware of the SOLs that await them in the future once they leave the ESL program. One of the ELL Latina intermediate students welcomes tests as evidenced by her comments regarding a math test:

> *Pues, bueno, es fácil y van muy bien los exámenes, pero no tenemos SOLs ahí, solamente tenemos el examen de la ciudad y el examen de la escuela, lo cual son como ochenta preguntas. . .y no creo que no voy a tener problemas.*
>
> [Well, good, it's easy and the exams are going well, but we don't have SOLS there [in the class], we only have the citywide exam and the school-wide exam, which is about 80 questions. . . . And I don't think I'm going to have any problems.] (Lucía, 9th grade)

This student is very optimistic about taking tests, welcoming the opportunity. Standardized testing is an integral part of this school environment. All students, including Latino ELLs, are aware of the importance of testing. This school is very proud to be fully accredited. The symbols of accreditation, banners with stars, are placed strategically outside of the building and in the Main Office and add meaning to signs everywhere that this is a quality school that meets Virginia's Standards of Accreditation (SOA), and Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessments (VDOE, 2005).

Summary of NCLB Policies at the High School Level

To summarize the aspects of NCLB at the school level, policy directives from the federal government and the Virginia Department of Education are fully implemented as follows:

- Students in core content areas are tested in SOLs if they are enrolled in courses that must take end-of-course assessments.

- ESL teacher may make assessment accommodations by reading the examinations aloud, allowing the use of bilingual dictionaries, or permitting extra time for ELLs to complete examinations.

- ELLs who have passed English proficiency level four tests and exit into all English classrooms, are monitored by ESL teachers for two years.

- ELLs who have been in the United States less than one year are exempt from taking standardized tests for that year.

The directives of NCLB are an integral part of the school due to the accreditation assessment of SOLs. In the next section I discuss how Latino ELLs are participating in content area classes, and the strategies for success employed by classroom teachers to help them learn.

Strategies for Success in Second Language Acquisition Classes

Latino ELLs do not spend the entire school day in classes for ELLs. Being in content area classes is an integral part of their school experience. In this section I examine how Latino ELLs learn academic English in content area classes, and the pedagogical strategies used by mainstream teachers. I report the findings of interviews with school administrators, teachers, and my observations of Latino ELLs in content area classes.

Carrasquillo and Rodríquez (2002) point out that ELLs may need special instructional support to acquire their second language. They indicate that many students are mainstreamed into regular classrooms with English speaking peers without instructional support from language specialists, or are placed in regular classrooms where teachers have not had specialized training to consider the learners' linguistic and academic needs. An important factor in deciding placement in academic mainstream classes may be the linguistic capability of the second language learner to understand the content. Carrasquillo and Rodríquez (2002) further state that the term mainstreaming itself is a problem because of the connotations associated with the field of special education. I am using mainstream here as the inclusion of ELLs into an all-English speaking environment. Given that so many Latino ELLs are dispersed throughout different mainstream content area classes, there is a need to make sure that students understand both the academic content, and the communicative functional directions provided by teachers. Dong (2005) reflects that teachers should teach the content-specific academic language, as well as pay

attention to the functional elements of language. Checking for understanding and meaning includes using key terms such as: (1) Do you follow? (2) What does this mean? Learning the context of what the student is supposed to do helps in defining how to do the tasks. I observed these points when I visited the content area classes and believe it helped students clarify their tasks. Examples are: (1) In the Earth Science class where there was only one Latino student, the teacher went to his desk and asked, "Do you have any questions about the graph?"; (2) In another Earth Science class the teacher, who is bilingual, explained the directions to the whole class in English, she then went to the back to the group of Latinos and asked them in Spanish if they had any questions, and pointed to the diagrams.

In the following section I demonstrate how mainstream content area teachers are making changes in their teaching approaches to accommodate the cognitive learning needs of Latino ELLs. My findings reflect observations from my visits to classrooms, from speaking with content area teachers, and how teachers taught their subject areas to engage Latino ELLs to use academic English in the second language acquisition.

Second Language Acquisition in Mainstream Classes

Each of the mainstream teachers spoke with me about making changes in their pedagogical strategies to accommodate the learning needs of Latino ELLs. Some changes reflect good teaching techniques that are valuable for all learners. Some mainstream teachers shared their teaching strategies as a way of helping Latino ELLs succeed in the content area classes with their English-speaking counterparts. The major findings I present based on my observations and research follows these organizers:

- leadership roles;
- small group instruction;
- peer assistance;
- earth Science classes;
- public Speaking class and rubrics;
- inclusion model, U. S. History class; and
- computer drafting instruction.

Leadership Roles

I saw examples of good development of Latino's self esteem when I visited the Spanish III class. The Spanish teacher was filming students producing a short dialogue in Spanish with

two partners. The students had written their dialogues and were using the past tense of the verb *comprar*, [to buy]. Juan, the 11th grade mainstream ELL student, had a prominent role in asking the questions of his dialogue partners, and responding to their answers. In this case the students were hearing an authentic accent of a person of Mexican descent, and the student was displaying the proper sound and syntax of an educated Latino speaker. In another dialogue Graciela, the 12th grade mainstream ELL student, was taking the lead by speaking Spanish and asking her partners about the preparations for the birthday party. Again, the students were able to listen to an authentic Spanish accent spoken by a girl from Cuba. The students in this class had two authentic Spanish-speaking voices to hear. By using the video, students in this Spanish class can replay frequently to see and listen to them speak. The Spanish teacher can also use it with his Spanish I students to allow them to see and hear authentic dialogues produced by the students in this school. He was also giving value to having authentic dialogue spoken by two distinct Spanish speakers from different countries. The teacher's attempt to incorporate the ELLs' linguistic and cultural background in these short dialogues gives agency to their self-esteem as contributing members of this learning community.

Small Group Instruction

I saw an example of small group instruction when I visited a remedial math class for ELLs. I observed the math teacher, who had been teaching only two years use terms familiar to students as he talked about fractions. He used an example of dividing a pizza into pieces. There was only one Latina student in that class so she did not have an opportunity to use her native language with any of the other students who came from different countries in Africa and the Middle East. This class is a basic math class. When ELLs finish this class they should have mastered 6th to 8th grade skills and be ready to enter the Algebra I class. This course counts as an elective and helps to prepare them to pass the Mathematics 8 SOL examination. The teacher acknowledges that if the ELLs have enough academic English knowledge, they may be able to understand the word problems in the Algebra SOLs. Because of the level of academic cognitive knowledge, and the level of English understanding, the Math teacher attempted to individualize the pace of the class so that students work at their capacity. He makes sure that each student speaks some English every day in the classes to reinforce the second language. This remedial math class was started this past spring using resources from the Title III allocation portion of the No Child Left Behind Act for Limited English Proficient students (LEP).

Peer Assistance

I observed a good example of peer assistance when I visited with Juan in a U. S. Government class. His girl friend, which is in the same class, assisted him through the process of learning how to use a computer to retrieve information about an assignment. The interaction between the two of them was an example of Vygotsky's (1978) scaffolding. In this case the peer was his girl friend, who was able to guide him in understanding the questions and help perform the required tasks on the computer and retrieve the information for the assignment.

The student teacher was teaching this class and was reviewing the structure of the United States government with students in the computer lab. She gave them a worksheet in which they had to find links to select government departments using real life situations and contextualized information gathering questions such as: (1) Since gas prices are rising, what are some tips that the Department of Energy suggests to save money?; (2) According to the Department of State website, how does one get a passport?; (3) What major piece of legislation is the Department of Education currently involved with?

The student teacher walked around the room and helped each student at each individual's computer station. Juan's girl friend gave him assistance with finding the answers and writing them down on his paper. When I interviewed him and asked him about this class, he said that his girl friend helped him and explained things to him because he found the class a little difficult, but he could understand her explanations and her help reinforced the teacher's teaching. At this time his grade was a C in the class and she had an A. Using computer technology and working in pairs with someone he understood, helped him grasp the academic contents and not feel out of place in a setting where he was the only Latino student. This is an example of the Vygotskian (1978) principle of learning from more capable peers in the Zone of Proximal Development, (ZPD).

Earth Science Classes

My observations included two Earth Science classes in which Latino ELLs were enrolled. Earth Science SOLs have one of the highest failure rates for all students according to one of the teachers that I interviewed (Earth Science Teacher I, Interview). In one class Hugo was the only Latino ELL student. In the other class there were four Latino ELLs. Both classes provided me an opportunity to see dynamics of the interaction with other English-speaking students and their teachers. In both classes, I observed scientific inquiry approaches used by the teachers.

Earth Science: One Latino ELL Student

On the day that I observed Hugo in a first period Earth Science class, the teacher was giving a lesson on the composition of the atmosphere. She connected her lesson to a video they had seen in the previous class period. She gave students colored pencils to use for creating their diagrams explaining the boundaries of the earth's surface. The teacher used the overhead projector and wrote with colored pencils to show the distinct boundaries. The students were to replicate her work in their seats. She also gave them each graph paper and instructed them to make graphs for measuring changes in the atmosphere based on pressure, temperature, the percent of gasses, and the density of gasses. Students created their graphs under the guidance of the Earth Science teacher. Many assessment procedures use graphs and charts and she reinforced this learning aspect by asking them to create their own models. Hugo was very attentive throughout the lesson. He drew very precise diagrams on his paper as well as his graphs. While he did not speak much English in the class, he kept up and understood the directions of the teacher. A final aspect of the lesson was to conduct an experiment. The teacher gave everyone a number of beads and rawhide. The students were to take their beads to the window and observe how the ultra violet light of the sun changed the color of the beads. All of the students went to the window to see if their beads would change colors. A girl in front of Hugo's desk was trying to amass a lot of beads by asking some of the other students to give her their beads. A number of them did give her their beads. When she turned around and spoke to Hugo in English, asking him to give her some of his beads, I observed that he looked down and appeared not to understand what she was saying, so as not to give her his beads. She finally got a little frustrated and turned around and gave up. In this case, by not acknowledging that he understood her request, he avoided a confrontation with the girl and he did not give up his beads.

Earth Science Class with Multiple Latino ELLs

When I entered this Earth Science classroom, my eyes were immediately drawn to the notice on the chalkboard displaying the date for the Earth Science SOL examination, May 17. This was a reminder that the test was only a month away. I observed five Latino ELLs integrated into this mainstream class. Here the ELLs were able to sit together so that they could help each other with the English terminology, and carry out class assignments using scientific inquiry methods illustrated by the teacher. The lesson for the day was to examine features of the ocean floor and how to measure its depths. The Earth Science teacher used the overhead to

demonstrate how to create a graph measuring using meters and kilometers as measurements. Latino ELLs are familiar with the scientific terms of kilometers and meters because they are used in their native countries as opposed to the measurements of miles and feet used here, so they were comfortable building on prior knowledge. She gave graph paper for this portion of the assignment. When she instructed them to work in groups, the Latino ELLs moved their chairs together and worked as a team, but first they worked individually at solving the assignments and afterwards came together to confer on the answers. This Earth Science teacher is also a native Spanish speaker. As the teacher moved around the room from group to group, she gave explanatory comments in Spanish, and then translated the explanations into English. The students had an opportunity to hear the academic English language in the large group, then hear Spanish at the small group level, then hear the English a second time in small groups. Both Earth Science teachers had given each Latino ELL a textbook to take home, to use the glossary of scientific terms used in this class in Spanish. Having several Latino ELLs in this class enabled them to work together as a team to solve problems. This was a good example of cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1993). Another key factor in learning academic content was to having a bilingual teacher teach the content area, enabling students to ask the questions in Spanish they might not have been able to fully express in English. Lastly, having bilingual materials they could take home meant the students' could reference materials to do their assignments. Each of these pedagogical strategies advanced second language acquisition. Latino ELLs expressed satisfaction in being in these classes and felt they had a good opportunity to pass the SOLs because of the individual attention they were receiving from each Earth Science teacher.

Public Speaking Class Using Rubrics

I saw Julie in the Public Speaking class where she was the only Latina there. She was a member of a team consisting of two other students; their role that day was to make a presentation to the entire class about the effects of smoking. She spoke about the effects of smoking in a clear voice to the class and backed up her speech with pictures of diseased cancerous lungs that she found through her research from the Internet. The teacher used a peer grading sheet as well as his own speech argumentation rubric sheet. The teacher's rubric sheet included categories for appearance, language, content, and time to complete the argument. Julie was the third member of her team, and was not able to complete the entire speech she had prepared. However, she

consolidated her information and gave the key features using visuals as her organizer. The rubrics provided the teacher with the opportunity to give Julie feedback on her performance and to evaluate the quality of her work using specific criteria for each category.

Inclusion Model

One innovative approach for teaching academic English in the content areas is the inclusion model. As part of her own curiosity and research with other school systems about how to help students master academic English in content area classes, the ESL teacher found ways to resolve problems by approaching other teachers willing to work with her. She implemented some informal networking among teachers, which included meeting with some who had the same planning time as she, or by meetings during lunch, or visiting others after school. She engaged the teachers in conversations regarding how best to help ELLs and by finding out what they had to learn for specific units such as vocabulary words and what quizzes were going to be given. Those open-ended conversations were welcomed by the teachers and were the first steps to establishing a presence in the content-area classes. She began by embedding herself in the biology class.

> I sat with them [ELLs], took notes with them, I did group work with them. So I always knew what their homework was. I always knew the concept because I had just listened to her explain it…I even coached [ELLs to speak in English] a little bit, 'How do you ask?' This is something you need to know, go ask her, be brave. (ESL Teacher, Interview)

In one U. S. History content area class the teacher of ELLs became a student and a teacher due to the concerns she had about her students' achieving academic success in those types of classes. The teacher noticed that many ELLs came to her before and after school or during lunch, and asked for help doing their history homework. The ESL teacher embedded herself in the U.S. History class three years ago. Six of her students needed U.S. History to pass the SOL tests so she went to the chair of the History department and asked him if there was a teacher willing to work with her students. He sent her to the coach, a social studies teacher, who agreed to accept her help in teaching the ELLs that were assigned to him. The ESL teacher became a valuable member of the social studies class not only for the ELL Latino students but for the 20 other students as well.

One Latina who benefited from the ESL teacher's participation in an inclusion class stated in her interview with me:

A veces no entendíamos. . .pues la historia es mucho difícil. . .pero ella nos explicaba.

[Some times we didn't understand. . . because history is so hard. . . but she explained it to us.] (Graciela, 12th grade)

Ella nos ayudó mucho con esa clase para pasar el SOL.

[She helped us a lot to pass the SOLs by being in that class.] (Graciela, 12th grade)

The ESL teacher negotiated with the coach about how to implement different strategies he was using. Some examples of changes in teaching strategies that were incorporated are as follows:

- increase time limits in reading passages from rigid minutes to flexible minutes;

- reinforce concepts using cognitive maps; pictorials, and using typed notes with overhead projector;

- reduce difficult concepts like inflation to terms that are understandable to all students;

- listen and participate in academic conversations with peers;

- modify assignments to accommodate linguistic ability of second language learners;

- give same assessments to all students;

- initiate informal discourse that provokes conversation in the second language such as chatting, talking about assignments, and queries whether they did their homework.

Among the interesting outcomes of this inclusion class were the modifications that the social studies teacher made in the U.S. History class. The changes were valuable for all students. The U. S. history teacher adapted some of the strategies he used in this class to his other classes. He shared his views about his own professional development by having the teacher of ELLs in his class.

The best thing that happened to make me more aware was when I actually had the inclusion class. I hadn't been properly trained in how to teach that particular group of students. . . . Instead of being an auditory teacher, I would have to include a lot of visuals (History Teacher, Interview).

This is an example of an activity originally intended to assist Latino ELLs learn academic content, that became valuable pedagogy for all students. Four of the six ELLs passed the SOL in U. S. History, and two of them now in mainstream classes graduated this year.

Computer Drafting Class: Learn by Doing

My observation of Lucía in this Computer Drafting class enabled me to see how the teacher used software technology to contextualize knowledge and engage an intermediate Latina ELL to develop computer skills in drafting while acquiring English language skills in a low anxiety environment. Lucía created her "dream house" using software technology skills acquired in this drafting class. In this class the teacher worked with the students individually at their own pace at each computer workstation. He demonstrated how to use the software to design a house to the entire class. Afterwards, the teacher came to her workstation, and Lucía, a keen observer, recorded the steps the teacher had demonstrated noting the command buttons she needed to follow. After she had written the steps in her notebook, she proceeded to do her work on her computer workstation.

> *Computación es muy fácil. Simplemente te dan una hoja, está un diseño de una casa y solamente comienza a dibujar en la computadora y ya.*
>
> [Computer drafting is very easy. The [teacher] gives you a sheet with the design of a house and you simply start to draw it on the computer.] (Lucía, 9th grade.)
>
> When I asked her if she needed to know a lot of English to learn to do this task, she said:
>
> *No, solamente los nombres de cada objeto que hay en la computadora, y pero solamente casi no inglés, y los mandatos que le das. . . .El profesor se sienta por cada estudiante y él no enseña así por completo a todos, sino que va uno a uno. Y te toma la computadora hace una casa para que tú veas como la está haciendo, y después la quita, y te pone que tú la hagas tal como él la hizo.*
>
> [No, only the names of the icons that is on the computer. . .You hardly need English, only to follow the commands. . . . The professor sits with us individually, and when he is teaching you he takes the computer and draws the house so that you can see how he does it, and then he deletes it, and you have to follow the model he has done.] (Lucía, 9th grade)

Lucía used this newfound knowledge to create *mi casa de sueños* [my dream house]. She elaborated on the original design and proceeded to create her own model. In our follow-up interview about the house, she told me that this house she designed using her acquired computation skills is her dream house she has cherished since she was a little girl. She described her design in full detail. See Appendix T for the design of her model.

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Primero, pues, desde chiquita tenía ese sueño de esa casa, y esta vez que tuve esta clase y que el profesor me enseñó hacer las demás casas y aprendí y tuve la oportunidad de hacer esa casa de mi pensamiento y de mi idea.

[First of all, since I was a little child I had this dream about this house, and this time since I had this class, the professor showed me how to make the houses, and I had the opportunity to make a house from my own thoughts and my own ideas.] (Lucía, 9th grade)

She had well defined ideas about the shape of the house and decorations. Here are a few of the things she described to me about her drafting drawing and how she learned the English names of each item:

- A hexagon shaped house because she likes the shape;
- living room with couches, chairs, but she didn't add a television because the computer program did not have one;
- a desk in each of the children's room, very pretty, a chair, and a bookcase stand;
- a kitchen, with stove, sink, dishwasher, and microwave oven;
- many plants because she likes plants near the doors;
- wooden doors in the entrance, or something similar, large, and the door that is in the middle is made of glass; and
- a car in the driveway.

We discussed how long it had taken her to come up with her creation. It had taken about 5 class periods, but a catastrophe happened after she finished her masterpiece—she forgot to hit the save button and, consequently, lost all her work. She felt like crying after having done so much work, but fortunately her teacher was willing to help her so she started all over again. Her teacher commented to me that she is an exceptional student and she does well in the class. He, too, thought that the house was beautiful. He would not comment on how much money it would cost to build a house with those specifications. The important pedagogical significance of this work is that the student was fully engaged in constructing her own knowledge by building on prior knowledge with the help of the teacher. By working on her design, Lucía was fully engaged in her project, she learned measurements, mathematics, design, and English. She gave way to her childhood fantasies and connected her dreams to the present and linked them to future possibilities as a designer or perhaps at the time when she herself might become a homeowner.

The software technology helped this to become a learner-centered classroom with the teacher as a guide and facilitator of learning. This represents a classic example of Zone of Proximal Development, (ZPD), scaffolding according to Vygotskian (1978) principles where the teacher was able to move the student to work on her own design using her own creativity, while being available to move to a higher level of capability.

Summary of Second Language Acquisition in Mainstream Classes

In this section I have illustrated a number of pedagogical strategies used by mainstream teachers to help Latino ELLs become engaged in second language acquisition and have successful experiences using academic English in their classes. The findings and strategies are as follows:

- leadership roles enhanced students' self-esteem;

- small group instruction gave students individual attention.;

- peer assistance served as a model for understanding complex issues;

- visuals, concept maps, realia, and bilingual textbooks using a scientific inquiry approach helped ELLs to understand Earth Science classes and tapped into their prior knowledge;

- inclusion model of ESL teacher into content area classroom gave ELLs confidence, and helped content area teacher adapt to linguistic and cultural realities of the second language learner;

- inclusion model was good teaching for all learners; and

- computer drafting class enabled Latina ELL acquire new skills using technology, critical thinking skills, and built on her prior experiences and wishes.

While the Latino ELLs spend a good deal of their academic day in mainstream classes, it is in the ESL class that I observed the most consistent use of English. In the next section I examine pedagogy in the ESL classroom and describe how the ESL teacher assists Latino ELLs to acquire second language skills.

Transformative Pedagogy in the ESL Classroom

Cummins (2000) states that transformative pedagogy enables the teacher and students to "relate curriculum content to their individual and collective experiences and to analyze broader social issues relevant to their lives" (p.90). In this section I describe the ESL classroom as a model for transformative pedagogy. The ESL teacher that I observed during my research is a fully certified ESL teacher who had taught for 11 years, five of them at this school. The ESL

program here has grown over the years to the point that it is now a fully self-contained program for the high school with a beginning, intermediate, and advanced ESL class for each level. Spanish is the most common language spoken by the ELLs in this school followed by Arabic and African languages. In this section I illustrate how the ESL teacher works with Latino ELLs to enable them to develop transformative pedagogy that embodies the concepts presented by Cummins (2000) when he states that it creates "contexts of empowerment where students identities are being affirmed as they participate academically" (p. 263). The discussion is framed around the following: (1) Climate and structure of the ESL classroom: Animated and academically rigorous, and (2) Critical pedagogy: I-Movie and empowerment.

Climate and Structure of the ESL Classroom: Animated and Academically Rigorous

Based on my observations, both the classroom climate and structure of the ESL class are conducive to using the second language and to communicating in an accepting, and affirming environment that is animated. The classroom is seen as a refuge away from home. The ESL teacher shared her views in our interview:

> I realize they have backgrounds that are so varied and different and their ability levels are so different you would think it would be impossible to bring something so diverse together, but I think their greatest need is to learn the language and that is what unified us in the classroom. . . .We sort of all become a family when we are in there, and I find respect for each other in there. . . .I think the ESL class is more like a haven, this is home, this is my home base while I am here at this school, and when they are in the room we are a family. (ESL Teacher, Interview).

Upon entering the classroom several things stand out. The world map in the back of the room, which takes almost half of the board space, echoes the students' diversity. It highlights the native countries and the names of the ELLs that are enrolled in the ESL program. This classroom is composed of students from Afghanistan, El Salvador, Ghana, Honduras, Mexico, Palestine, and Somalia. They have been assigned to this classroom for one thing: to learn English and adapt to the cultural, linguistic, and academic environment of a secondary school. This place, this room, their respective names pinned to spot on the board, defines one aspect of their identity and who they are. For them it has been a long road and journey from their home countries to this high school. The second observation that stands out in this classroom is their animated conversation when they enter this room they are all speaking English and are being respectful of

each other's abilities. Others are also freely using their native language and speaking Spanish with each other. In this classroom, a teacher who does not have a command of any of the languages spoken by this group of students is using her pedagogical skills to transform this space into a place of understanding, knowledge, and second language acquisition. Statements from Latino ELLs reinforced and echoed these perspectives.

Ella no habla español, pero si hace sentir a uno bien.

[She doesn't speak Spanish, but she does make you feel good.] (Ana, 9th grade)

Porque ellas (ESL teachers) se ponen a pensar en los problemas de nosotros.

[Because they (ESL teachers) think about our problems.] (Hugo, 10th grade)

Sabe explicar los trabajos, como hacerlos.

[She knows how to explain the assignments and how to do them.] (Manuel, 9th grade)

Classroom Space

In addition to displaying the students' names and countries of origin on the map examples of the students' work are posted in different areas of the room. Around the room there are workstations containing folders for each student. Because this is a special place where students can examine their work or retrieve their papers, they have immediate access to their work in progress and can preview what they have accomplished in the ESL class. Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model theory on providing the contextual framework for classroom space, which is filled with interesting, comprehensible input and relevant materials is observable in this class. Krashen's theory also reinforces the concept that students should be in a low anxiety environment in order to achieve an optimal comprehensible learning level. A way of accomplishing this is by weaving academic English language learned in other classes into the ESL class.

Weaving Academic English in the ESL Classroom

While the observable effects of the NCLB Act are not immediately visible in this ESL classroom, upon close inspection they are apparent in the classroom teacher's rigor about maintaining high accountability standards and helping all students achieve to their fullest potential. The ESL teacher incorporates the spirit of the NCLB Act in the ESL classroom by preparing students to exit the ESL program and enter regular mainstream classes. The Latino ELLs that are in mainstream content area classes often have difficulty in understanding the academic concepts of the core subjects. In addition to using pedagogical strategies like the

inclusion model that was discussed earlier, this ESL teacher described another pedagogical strategy to overcome difficulties between core content classes and her ESL classroom. She related her strategies during our interview.

> When I have them for English, I realize I am preparing them for mainstream English classes, but I also realize I am teaching the language that they will use for their history, science and every other class. So, I allow for the reading/writing [ESL] class I allow the text of what we are reading to be the driving force, and I pull in all of the language, the vocabulary, the spelling, the grammar, the writing, cultural things and do more of a thematic unit. Involved in that. . . . If there is a term that we come across in a story and it's a term I know they will see in a math question, say decrease or increase. . . .I will just refer to that and put plus and minus on the board. I will write decrease and increase on the board and remind them, you will see this word in many places. In math, it will mean this. If you see it in U.S. History that the population increased in that state that means the number goes up. If it's in science it says that a bacteria is growing and something increases or decreases. . . .I will refer to that, but I'm still letting English, the literary concepts, those kinds of things drive my time with them (ESL Teacher, Interview).

This ESL teacher was employing *content-obligatory* and *content compatible* language approaches (Met, 1994). Content-obligatory language is identified with the specific objectives of the lesson and cannot be separated from the content. In this case, when the ESL teacher was incorporating math concepts about increase and decrease, the students needed to know these words in order to master the math content. When she asked students to use those same words in the ESL class, they were able to integrate the concepts in a manner that did not affect their ability to understand English. Latino ELLs were able to reinforce their knowledge in both domains, the content areas and in the ESL class, to be better prepared for taking the SOLs.

Animated Communication

Whenever I entered the ESL classroom I heard animated conversation among students in English. As they worked on their assignments they would ask each other questions in Spanish or English. The ESL teacher employed a variety of literary techniques to create collaborative dialogue among the students. Some examples included: (1) reading multicultural stories using authentic texts that extended their knowledge of other cultures and allowed them to compare with this own cultures; (2) writing poems using similes and metaphors; and (3) creating their

own books. Here I want to highlight two assignments, one used in an intermediate ESL class, and the other one used in the advanced ESL class. In one assignment in the intermediate ELL class the students were asked to write a poem about friendship. The teacher used similes and metaphors to describe the meanings of a poem. Lucía involved herself diligently in writing her poem, writing drafts in class and completing the assignment at home. Refer to Appendix S to see her finished poem. Ana also wrote a poem about peace, see Appendix R for her poem.

In the advanced ESL class the assignment involved creative writing a book of journals, stories, songs, and vocabulary based on reading Cisneros' *House on Mango Street* (1994). A pre-service teacher from Virginia Tech in the Department of Teaching and Learning and Foreign Languages and Literatures assisted Rosalinda in preparing this creative writing unit book. For each chapter they read in the book, the students had to create a piece of original work. Rosalinda prepared a book using computer technology to write her journals, select artwork, edit, and print it. See Appendix Q for a sample of her journal work, *I like to be a famous children psychologist*. Rosalinda wrote this piece that related to her lifelong dream of becoming a psychologist. These pieces of authentic student work demonstrate the high value that was placed on the student's ability to produce new language based on affirming their socio-cultural realities, bridging new ideals and using language to generate new knowledge and critical literacy. Refer to appendix V for another example of Hugo's ability to create art work to construct new knowledge that meshes the socio-cultural realities of his world with his new setting.

Summary of Climate and Structure of the ESL Classroom

In summarizing the climate and structure of the ESL classroom, my findings indicate that the ESL teacher employed a number of pedagogical strategies to help Latino ELLs acquire the second language. A compilation of my findings related to pedagogical strategies follows:

- integrated vocabulary concepts from mainstream classes into literary concepts that were being taught in ESL class;
- developed informal networks with mainstream teachers to determine what was being taught and how to use vocabulary and concepts in ESL class;
- created a low anxiety environment in the classroom to allow ELLs to speak the second language without feeling uncomfortable;
- promoted creative writing activities using essays, poems, and book production using technology;

- encouraged communication oral skills by having students read and speak in the second language and created space for discourse by listening to each other's work;

- created accountability strategies and held students to high standards of performance;

- used literary materials from a cross-cultural approach encouraging a multicultural perspective to teaching and learning;

- encouraged parental involvement by inviting parents and family to presentations of students' work; and

- created writing through poems, stories, journals, built on students' lives and experiences to promote a vision of social justice.

In each phase of the learning activities that took place in the ESL classroom, the teacher was a collaborator and a facilitator for learning. The students responded eagerly and enthusiastically and were using the second language to express themselves through speaking and writing. In the following section my research findings demonstrate how the ESL teacher used critical pedagogy to assist two Latino ELLs develop second language acquisition skills using technology to enhance learning.

Critical Pedagogy: I-Movie

The ESL teacher infused her class using models of critical pedagogy involving Latino ELLs in cognitively demanding tasks by activating prior knowledge, acquiring new language skills, and using creative presentation methods. Here, I illustrate one such activity carried out by two students in the advanced ESL class to demonstrate collaboration across disciplines between teachers, and to show the possibilities of linking technology as a teaching and learning tool to help Latino ELLs acquire second language skills. Two advanced Latino ELLs, Hugo and Rosalinda, wrote, scripted, and produced a four-minute I-Movie about their story in their ESL class over a two-week period. The ESL teacher and the Media Technology specialist assisted them throughout the process. Appendix U includes the unit plan for My Story, project guidelines. and rubric used for grading developed by the ESL teacher. The ESL teacher created this unit using backward design as described by Wiggins (1998). This process assists teachers to plan with the end goal in mind. In this case, the teacher knew that the finished product was to be a completed movie. She knew that she was going to devote 10 teaching days to researching, writing, editing, and learning the mechanics of using the I-Movie software with the assistance of the Media Technology Specialist. They alternated the educational sites between the school's

Media Center to use the Internet, and the ESL classroom, by bringing in portable laptop computers.

The students were given project guidelines to follow in creating their story. They had to learn how to use the Internet to research and retrieve information. They learned how to scan pictures on the computer with the I-Movie software. They learned how to use a video camera to conduct and record interviews with their parents in their native language, and they translated those interviews into English. The four-minute tape included the following dialogue spoken in English by student narrators: (1) an introduction including their immigration story; (2) a body of the English text including, but not limited to, their native country, education, customs, economy of their home countries, the type of government and issues; and (3) a closing section including what they missed the most about their home country, current interests, and future plans.

This ESL unit combined elements of critical and transformative pedagogy for the purpose of analyzing and understanding the social realities grounded in the lives of the students, and built on a vision of critical inquiry giving them the literacy tools for full participation in a democratic society as described by Cummins (2000). Both Hugo and Rosalinda researched information about prior knowledge of their home countries, building on the knowledge of their families by interviewing their parents in Spanish, and related this knowledge to their experiences. They sought and analyzed information about future careers by seeking information on the Internet. They talked about their future aspirations such as wanting to be a car designer (Hugo) and a child psychologist (Rosalinda).. They used the results of their research to produce the four-minute video in English, and framing a vision about their place in society. Cummins' (2000) framework for transformative pedagogy fits well into the creation of this video. This first framework, Focus on Meaning, relates the textual and instructional meaning into their lives. When I interviewed Hugo and Rosalinda, both of them expressed to me what they felt about being in that class and what it meant to them.

> *Quería expresar lo que siento a través de esa película.*
>
> [I wanted to express what I feel through this movie.] (Hugo, 10th grade)
>
> *Esa clase me levanta el espíritu.*
>
> [That class lifts up my spirit.] (Rosalinda, 10th grade)

Cummins (2000) second framework, Focus on Language, includes not only focusing on the formal features of language development, but also on the "development of *critical language*

awareness which encompasses exploring the relationships between language and power" (p. 276). This was brought out prominently for me when I watched Hugo's video and listened to the compelling song he chose to insert in his video.

The song is a *Tejano Corrido,* a [Tex-Mexican] type of song that is sung along the borders of Mexico and Texas. When I asked him about it, he said that a Mexican writer wrote it. This writer and his young daughter risked crossing the border with a *coyote.* The term *coyote* is a pejorative term for a Mexican smuggler, who charges a fee to bring undocumented persons across the Mexican border into the United States. In the process, his little girl died on the journey. Focus on language awareness is a way of reinforcing students' sense of identity Cummins (2000). The use of this song reinforces Hugo's sense of identity. He told me that he wanted to include that song as a point of reference to highlight the risks, the many struggles, and outright suffering that people go through to come to the United States. By inserting this music in this segment, he was making a statement about social justice and critical pedagogy to question the inhumanness of social and economic poverty that abounds in a land of wealth like the United States.

Likewise, for Rosalinda, as she related to me in her interview, her goal since childhood has been to become a child psychologist. When I probed her further about this, she said that there has been so much child abuse that there is a need to protect children and to have a place for them to be cared for. She wanted to use her bilingual skills to help children here in the United States, or perhaps return to her home country.

A final point on Cummins' framework for academic language learning is his Focus on Use, "which uses language to generate new knowledge, create literature and art, and act on social realities, to illustrate important components of critical literacy" (p. 278). In preparing this I-Movie, Hugo and Rosalinda developed their literacy skills. Through the creative medium of preparing a video production, they integrated that new knowledge by using research skills for Internet searches. They promoted their cultural and linguistic identity by sharing with the viewer the interviews in Spanish with their families, and they shared their hopes for the future. Finally, they proudly presented their production to their parents, members of the faculty at the school, and to other students as a testament to possibilities of engagement and affirmation of ¡*Sí se puede*! Yes, I can!

Crossing the Borders of Latino Cultures

       An unexpected outcome of the creation of the I-Movie for both of these students was to learn about each other's cultures from Mexico and El Salvador, and to experience an inter-cultural exchange between both families. As the two students developed their individual storyboards, they consulted and assisted each other in filming the interviews with the parents. Rosalinda had borrowed a video camera from a girl friend. Hugo did not have access to a video camera, so he asked Rosalinda if she could video his segment with his parents in his home. Cultural mores were broken when Rosalinda had to ask her parents' permission to visit the home of his parents. She needed to convince her parents that she was producing an important piece of work for school and that it was a legitimate assignment to film the movie in the home of the boy's parents in order to bring authenticity to the work. When Rosalinda's parents agreed to take her to visit Hugo's parents and have her film the interview, they bridged a cultural divide. For both sets of parents it was a warm and welcoming event. By drawing on the resources of both cultures and household knowledge, the students validated their cultures and put into practice the concepts of the funds of knowledge approach, which is to allow the possibility of seeing beyond the classroom into other discourses that shape students' lives as described by González, Moll and Amanti, (2005).

Summary of Critical Pedagogy I-Movie

       To recap my findings, in this section on critical pedagogy, I examined the multifaceted role of the ESL teacher in creating pedagogical practices that promote second language acquisition. In that classroom the ESL teacher:

- encouraged student engagement through contextualized learning;
- created a classroom climate that allowed for Latino ELLs to use the second language in a variety of modes including, speaking, reading, writing, and presentational by incorporating technology; and
- fostered parental involvement and affirmed the families and cultures of the students by including them in the development of the I-Movies;

The ESL classroom served as a beacon for second language exploration in a creative learning environment that was academically rigorous and culturally sensitive to their sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds, and that helped to promote a forward thinking agenda about their future in a more just society.

While the ESL classroom became a focal point for academic progress in the second language, and offered a welcoming climate the Latino students, it was in this classroom where I began to hear the students' stories about significant persons who helped them negotiate the learning environment of the school. I refer to the many comments that surfaced in the focus group interviews and in individual interviews. In this next section I describe the Latino/a ELL voices that gave rise to this issue.

Responsive Practices of Caring Teachers

During the focus group sessions and again in the individual interview sessions, the students shared with me memorable moments they thought about when they mentioned significant persons who helped them along the way in this school. They referred to not only those content area teachers who were helpful, but they also referred to those who played a significant role in helping them cope with the stressors of the school environment and those who could intercede on their behalf with persons in administrative capacities.

Caring about students as people is one of the hallmarks of a culturally responsive teacher according to Gay (2000). How teachers care about students is shown by the way teachers pay attention to their emotional well-being and their academic success by holding them in high esteem and raising thresholds of high expectations for their work. Gay (2000) also stated that: "caring interpersonal relationships are characterized by patience, persistence, facilitation, validation and empowerment for the participants" (p. 47). A number of statements made by the Latino ELLs bear this out. The Latino ELLs felt supported by members of the teaching faculty.

Students' Voices

The students expressed their feelings about their teachers in a number of ways. Here are their words:

> *Es que ella nos explica y nos aconseja y nos ayuda.*
> [It's like she explains things to us, she gives us advice and she helps us.] (Rosalinda, 10th grade)
> *Ella enseña bien y les tiene mucha paciencia.*
> [She teaches well and she has a lot of patience] (Ana, 9th grade)

These statements made by the students fit with Gay's philosophy about the caring teacher. She had patience; she also cared about their well-being, gave them advice, and was able to counsel them.

Here is another statement that fits the model of the caring teacher.

Yo solamente tengo una maestra que digamos se preocupa un poco.

[I only have one teacher that I would say cares a bit about me.] (Hugo, 10th grade)

This statement reflects both Gay's (2000) and Noddings'(2003) sentiments about caring. Noddings (2003) says that "caring involves responding to the expressed needs of the cared for" (p. 242). The next statement by Mario tells me how the teacher responded to him by explaining things to him because there were no other Latino students with whom he could consult.

En la clase de health, me explica, porque no hay otros latinos.

[In the health class, she explains things to me because there are no other Latinos.] (Mario, 9th grade).

Cualquier cosa que tengo un problema voy con ella y me ayuda siempre.

[Whenever I have a problem, I go to her and she always helps me.] (Rosalinda, 10th grade)

Yo la entiendo a ella. . . .Y siento confianza con ella.

[I understand her. . . . And I feel confidence with her.] (Rosalinda, 10th grade)

Here again, Rosalinda's statement mirrors an element of what Gay calls validation. She feels the teacher understands her, (validates her) and she has confidence in her teacher. Lucía liked her history class because the teacher explained things well, and when she needed more time to complete her history assignment, she appreciated the teacher giving her extra time to complete it. Here was an example of Gay's use of strategies to fulfill their expectations. The teacher explained things and then gave her additional time to complete the assignment. The teacher gave her additional tools (strategies) to get her to perform her assignment.

La clase de historia es bien bonita, la profesora explica bien y da tiempo.

[The history professor is very nice, she explains things and gives us time to complete the work] (Lucía, 9th grade)

In the following statements are examples of Noddings (1999) concept of a caring curriculum that needs the continuing attention of "adults who will listen, invite, guide, and support them" (p. 13.). In these two statements, I heard the students talk about communication and the special powers to understand. It meant that the teachers were listening to them in a special way that touched them to their core.

Y es que ellas dos [ESL teachers] tienen un poder especial para entender las cosas.

[And it's like the two of them have a special power to understand things.] (Hugo, 10th grade)

Porque ella tiene como una clave para comunicarse, una cosa especial.

[Because it's like she has a key to communicate (with us), like a special thing.]

(Advanced ELL focus group, 10th-12th grade)

Both Gay and Noddings speak about caring teachers as guiding and supporting students. Here are statements that reinforced the concepts of guiding and supporting academic endeavors for Latino ELLs.

Nos ha dado un libro para que llevemos a la casa con definiciones en español.

[She's given us a book to take home with definitions in Spanish.] (Advanced ELL focus group)

También en la clase de español el profe me ayudaba antes con el inglés.

[Also, in the Spanish class, the professor used to help me with my English.]

(Intermediate ELL focus group)

Pero ella dice que es su deber explicarnos en español.

[But she says it's her obligation to explain things to us in Spanish] (Rosalinda, 10th grade)

Valenzuela (1999) identifies the politics of caring in her work with Mexican and Mexican-American youth by examining interrelated frameworks of caring theory, social capital, and Mexican culture of the term, *educación*, [education]. She ties caring theory with the concept of *educación*, [education] as it related to caring pedagogy. *Educación* is seen as a cultural construct and serves as the foundation for learning that links respect, dignity, and individuality of others into how one should live in the world. It is not tied to formal schooling *per se,* "but is closely tied to family values that emphasize, respect, responsibility, and sociality" (p. 21.). To be *bien educado* [well educated] is an important personal attribute in Latino cultures, not only Mexican culture, but also in Puerto Rican culture that allows for reciprocal exchanges between adults and children based on respect and *dignidad* [dignity] of the individual and engenders *confianza* [confidence] in and out of school. Valenzuela states that "social capital . . .emphasizes exchange networks of trust and solidarity among actors wishing to attain goals that cannot be individually attained" (p. 21). The Latino ELLs felt confident that teachers, who extended themselves to venture to go to their homes and to make connections with their families and learn

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more about them and their families, helped them in school so that they could be more fully prepared to face the future. Here are statements that corroborate these feelings.

Las dos [ESL teachers] me ayudaron muchísimo y vinieron a mi casa a hablar con mi mamá

[The two ESL teachers helped me a lot and they came to my home to speak to my mother.] (Graciela, 12th grade)

Llama a nuestros padres. Ha ido a nuestras casas, ha conocido a nuestros padres.

[She's called our parents, she's gone to our houses, she has met our parents.] (Advanced focus group]

These students made a connection with caring teachers by reflecting on how the teachers extended themselves beyond the immediate confines of being in a classroom, and connected with the cultural mores of persons who were *bien educados* [well educated] who cared enough to extend beyond school boundaries and make connections with families.

Summary of Responsive Practices of Caring Teachers

I did not intentionally seek to learn about the practices of a caring teacher, yet in both focus group meetings, and in individual interviews, Latino ELLs expressed their feelings about persons in the school who took a special interest in them. Latino ELLs said that they wanted to feel valued as individuals. Key persons on the faculty responded to their individual needs by making themselves available to speak with them whenever they needed to, by assisting them in the completion of challenging academic activities, and by holding them to high academic standards. Latino ELLs wanted to find advocates who could build bridges between faculty and themselves so that their voices and concern could be shared in a trustworthy manner. Latino ELLs were especially appreciative that caring teachers went the extra mile to visit their homes and learn more about their families and their culture in order to build, *confianza*, [trust] and create a sense of dignity and respect that are so valued in Latino cultures.

Chapter Five Summary of Findings

The findings are related specifically to the research questions in chapter 1, and focus on the nexus of the policies, pedagogy, and practices that assist Latino ELLs acquire the academic skills to learn academic English. I summarize my findings around the organizers presented at the beginning of the chapter:

- policies in place for NCLB Act and Latino ELLs,

- strategies for success in second language acquisition classes,

- transformative pedagogy in the ESL classroom, and

- responsive practices of caring teachers.

Policies in place for NCLB Act and Latino ELLs. My findings indicated the following:

- policies of the federal government remain in place,

- request to amend the assessment policy by the VDOE was rejected by the federal government,

- school division is exploring options for staff development, program designs, and outreach with institutions of higher education and other governmental agencies to improve educational opportunities for ELLs, and

- high school complies with the rules and regulations mandated by the school division and makes assessment accommodations where necessary.

Strategies for success in second language acquisition classes:

- content area teachers used different teaching approaches to accommodate ELLs,

- the inclusion model collaboration with content area teachers helped all learners, and

- technology enhanced learners' abilities to use critical thinking skills.

Transformative pedagogy in the ESL classroom:

- Latino ELLs effectively used their second language skills to produce new knowledge and literacy using constructivism and higher order thinking skills,

- students' linguistic and cultural heritage were validated and incorporated into new knowledge that focused on critical analysis of language use,

- students' progress was based on rigorous assessment,

- the teacher of ELLs created a classroom climate conducive to learning and language production, and

- the teacher of ELLs used technology as a medium of instruction to generate new knowledge that was grounded in their personal lives, experiences, and hopes for the future.

Responsive practices of caring teachers:

- responded to their individual differences as people,

- advocated for ELLs among faculty, parents, and students,

- visited homes and responded to family values to incorporate new knowledge in the classroom, and

- created classroom spaces of emotional warmth and acceptance.

In the final chapter I present the research implications of my study and propose additional recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary Discussions and Implications

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to analyze the impact of the policies of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) on the teaching and learning of 10 Latino English language learners (ELLs) in an urban high school in Virginia. Using ethnographic methodology, I examined the nexus of the policy of NCLB with the pedagogy of the ESL teacher and content area teachers, and the practices employed by caring teachers to enable Latino ELLs acquire a second language in an academic setting. By reviewing the policy, pedagogy, and practices used in this school, I examined the contextual framework and factors converging to help ELLs learn academic English. I observed the relationships fostered by students and faculty to support a learning climate for ELLs.

In this chapter I revisit my research questions, present a brief summary of my findings, and end the chapter with implications for policy, pedagogy, and practices; recommendations of the study; and possible implications for further research.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. How does the NCLB law affect the teaching and learning environment of the English language learners' (ELL) classroom in one urban high school?

2. How do Latino ELLs acquire the academic knowledge and second language skills to succeed in regular classes with native English speakers?

Findings

My findings are presented around key issues that impact on the teaching and learning environment for Latino English language learners (ELLs) in an urban high school. Table 6.1 depicts the impact of the research findings throughout this study. It frames the original questions proposed for the study as well as includes the unexpected findings, which surfaced while I was conducting the study.

Table 6.1

Impact of the NCLB Act (2001) on Teaching and Learning for Latino ELLs

Research Question No. 1	Research Question No. 2	Unexpected Findings
• Policies of NCLB and Latino ELLs	• Second language acquisition in mainstream classes	• Adaptation to a new setting
		• School climate
• Pedagogy in ESL classroom		• Caring teachers

Policies of NCLB and Latino ELLs

The State of Virginia uses SOLs to measure accountability to comply with NCLB mandates. Latino ELLs must meet language proficiency requirements, which means that they must participate yearly in assessments as required under NCLB. They must take end-of-course assessments if they are enrolled in courses that require SOLs. This high school has been certified as meeting accreditation status for the last two years. The visible impact of NCLB was not apparent in the ESL classroom. It was tangentially apparent and does play a significant part in the life of the school because the goal of the ESL program is to exit students into a full mainstream English program. Once Latino ELLs leave the ESL program their academic progress is monitored for two additional years. The teacher of ELLs was responsible for monitoring the program and for testing all students.

Adaptation to a New Setting and School Climate

In analyzing the findings in this study, I noted the importance of the sociocultural aspects of adjusting to new surroundings, and the impact that sociocultural ambiance had on the level of learning as well as feeling comfortable in a new academic setting. These findings also indicate that school climate had a strong influence on the behavior of Latino ELLs and their relationships with peers of other ethnic backgrounds. There appeared to be a misunderstanding by other students in the high school that all Latinos come from the same background; this set the stage for conflict, confusion, and potential problems among peers. Problems also surfaced between first generation and second generation Latinos, who had explosive confrontations and which led to school suspension for both groups. This was hurtful to the Latino ELLs because the confrontation was with someone of their cultural background and they felt they did not want to

be pitted against their compatriots. However, for them these issues did not mitigate the importance of maintaining a Latino presence that was visible within the school grounds as well as public spaces linked to Latino identity and using Spanish that defies assimilation into mainstream culture. Latino ELLs want to remain united and secure in their cultural identity, to keep their Spanish language alive, and use it as a tool for communication amongst themselves. Yet, when opportunities were presented for healthy interaction for Latinos to use English conversational skills with non-Latinos in sports and clubs, many opportunities for informal conversation and socialization took place as noted in chapter 4.

Second Language Acquisition in Mainstream Classes

On the pedagogical front, Latino ELLs were dispersed throughout the school into various mainstream classes where they were often the only one or two Latinos in classes. Their quest to master academic English and be successful in mainstream classes was often predicated on the strategies that mainstream teachers used to accommodate their learning styles, and their ability to provide materials to accommodate the linguistic capabilities of Latino ELLs. Several approaches used by mainstream teachers included: using small group instruction, providing special bilingual materials; using a variety of learning tools such as cognitive maps, creating graphic organizers, developing scientific experiments, and using computer technology to facilitate student learning. The teacher for ELLs developed informal networking among mainstream teachers to incorporate specialized vocabulary and concepts used in content area classes to reinforce multiple contexts in the ESL classroom. Inclusion models were also used in cognitively demanding content area classes such as science and social studies in order to give students increased opportunities to master course content and pass the end-of-course assessment in classes with SOLs. The positive interactions between teachers and learners often accrued to all learners, not just Latino ELLs, and culturally responsive teaching held students to high degrees of accountability. My findings indicated that Latino ELLs appreciated the efforts of some teachers to take into consideration their linguistic differences and make curricular adjustments as was described in chapter 5.

Pedagogy in the ESL Classroom

At the ESL classroom level, the teacher of ELLs prepared a warm and inviting classroom that was suitable for language production and communication, and affirmed the linguistic and cultural diversity of its learners by indicating locations of home countries on the map, showing pictures of students in the class, and displaying students' work. The classroom is conducted in a

low-anxiety affective filter level that encouraged communicative competence in the second language (Krashen, 1982). Latino ELLs spoke more English in this class than in any other classes that I visited. The students were comfortable with each other and their peers from other countries in the class, learned to listen respectfully, and participated in cognitively demanding tasks that challenged their abilities and put them into the Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD) as suggest by Vygotsky (1978). The teacher employed pedagogical strategies that were cognitively demanding, based on students' prior knowledge, and used computer technology to generate new knowledge and literacy. The teacher of ELLs also encouraged Latino ELLs to use authentic materials to create new knowledge that expressed their hopes and aspirations for the future that empowered them as learners.

Caring Teachers

Perhaps one of the most interesting findings for me resulted from listening to the stories told by the Latino ELLs about significant persons on the school staff who took a special interest in them personally and assisted them through phases of their educational experience in the school. They mentioned several attributes of caring behaviors such as: (1) "the teacher takes a special interest in me;" (2) "she advocates for us;" (3) "she encourages me to do my best;" (4) "she has a lot of patience;" (5) "we can trust her;" and (6) "she visited my home to meet my family." The ELLs spoke about these characteristics spontaneously in the focus groups and individual interviews. They were especially happy to have at least someone who spoke Spanish and who could be the bridge builder between themselves and the school administrators. They had high praise for their ESL teacher, who could somehow positively transform learning English so easily, and yet they were puzzled that she did not speak Spanish herself. They were able to understand the ESL teacher and made them feel confident as learners even though she did not speak their language. In effect it was a reciprocal relationship that developed between caring teachers and ELLs that validated and affirmed them both. Where the teacher displayed characteristics of caring behavior, Latino ELLs shared with me in the focus group and in individual interviews that they felt affirmed and welcomed in those classes and appeared to work diligently.

Implications of the Study

Latinos are the fasting growing group in the United States according to the latest U. S. Census Bureau (2005). The growth of Latinos in areas previously not populated by Latinos is

becoming the norm rather than an anomaly. This has educational implications for what scholars are identifying as the new "Latino Diaspora" (Valencia, 2002; Wortham et al.). As the Virginia Commonwealth continues to receive more and more ELLs into the k-12 public school system, it is imperative that we examine educational options for ELLs to ensure they have opportunities to engage in meaningful educational experiences that lead to high school graduation, and to equip them with the necessary knowledge to become productive members of society. Many ELLs are coming to the Green Valley in record numbers. The number of ELLs in the school division rose to 704 in the fall 2005 school year, compared to 534 the previous year.

In this section, I discuss implications for this study based on my research findings. They are presented within the framework of policies, pedagogy and practices that I have been following throughout this research. Subsequently, I present my recommendations to address the implication issues, and propose implications for further research.

Policies of NCLB and Latino ELLs

In order to survive the rigors of a global economy, learners need to be equipped with tools that will make them competitive in the marketplace. As Meier (2004) points out "relying on standardized tests as the only measure of school quality, NCLB usurps the right of local communities to define the attributes of a sound education" (p. 71). The implication of this study is that we should examine other indicators of educational success and not rely solely on testing that thrusts ELLs into situation where they are likely to fail because of lack of academic English skills.

Pedagogy

To survive and thrive in a democratic society, learners need tools that help them make decisions about how to prepare them to live and be productive citizens. The implications for pedagogy are that we equip them with the ability to construct their own knowledge and become critical thinkers so that they have the ability to make choices about their future. Because Latino ELLs enter schools with limited proficiency in the second language, teachers are often bound by content that must be covered rather than by the context within which to present the subject matter and are not aware about how to tap the intellectual and cognitive abilities the ELLs bring to the learning environment.

Because of the nature of the way most classes are organized in a large school like this, there is often disconnect between the teachers who teach mainstream classes and those to teach

English as a second language as a subject. There are little opportunities to come together as educators to discuss, plan, and assess the educational needs of ELLs from the perspective of the whole child and not discreet content embedded information. The networking that is done is usually informal and is dependent on the persuasiveness of the ESL teachers to consult with the mainstream teachers or vice versa.

Mainstream teachers, who by the nature of what they teach, have had few opportunities to learn how to build on the cultural and linguistic capabilities of ELLs in their classrooms with other learners, may miss opportunities to build on the students' prior knowledge and build bridges with native English speakers in their classrooms. This may lead to misinformation, and cognitive dissonance between ELLs and their English-speaking classmates.

When pedagogues hold ELLs responsible to high standards of achievement and give them the tools to meet those expectations, students rise to those expectations and believe in their ability to succeed. The implications for pedagogy demonstrate to the learning community that ELLs have the capacity and the ability to learn and succeed along with their English-speaking peers.

Practices

When students are new to a school environment, they may feel a sense of isolation and discomfort and have difficulties in adjusting to the mores of the school culture. This creates a need to find persons who will help them make transitions from their home cultures to the new environment and who respond to their concerns. Latino ELLs seek persons they can trust and respect their individual culture and language to advocate for them in situations where they do not have the linguistic capabilities or the knowledge about the culture of the school to speak for them.

As Latino ELLs strive to maintain a sense of personal identity, they may encounter challenges from other ethnic groups and English-speaking students that provoke them to act in violent and inappropriate ways that are detrimental to them and to others. Nevertheless, their sense of identity is forged with their use of Spanish language as a marker of who they are, and their physical characteristics as markers of personal identity. They want to retain their individuality and their identity as Latinos and they resist assimilation strategies. The implications for practice as educators are how to engage students of diverse languages and cultures to make

room for cultural diversity and break barriers of stereotypical behaviors so that the total school climate is enhanced by the linguistic and cultural values ELLs.

<div align="center">Recommendations of the Study</div>

Policies

While NCLB cannot be changed at this time, educators and policy makers should be asking themselves what are the policy implications of holding ELLs strictly accountable to measures that rely on standardized testing as measures of success? Educators and policy makers should be examining ways that are being recommended by educators and professional organizations on how to restructure educational accountability for NCLB so that it does not fall solely on standardized testing as a measure of academic success (Meier & Wood, 2004; Peterson & West, 2003; Sunderland, Kim & Orfield, 2005). A reflective discourse by policymakers, educators and parents needs to be ongoing if achievement gaps are to be narrowed for Latino ELL students. Professional organizations such as, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, (TESOL), National Association of Bilingual Education, (NABE), National Education Association, (NEA), and others to mention a few should be vigorously lobbying for reforms leading the way for reform and full funding. The current federal budget picture for fiscal 2007 is not good and budget cuts proposed by 5.5% (Public Education Network Weekly News Blast, 2006), are further hampering educational programs for ELLs.

The Virginia Department of Education should continue to appeal to the federal government for changes and flexibility in assessment policy for ELLs. The memorandum from the VDOE requesting changes in January 2005 was rejected by the Department of Education. This request could be revisited in 2006.

At the state level, local affiliates of the national organizations also have a stake in seeing that the educational needs of ELLs are being met. It would be timely for the major professional associations such as Foreign Language Association of Virginia, (FLAVA), the Capitol Area National Association of Bilingual Education, (CANABE), Virginia Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, (VATESOL), to come together for a summit to discuss the educational needs of ELLs. This could be jointly planned with ESL supervisors throughout the Commonwealth that are responsible for managing the ESL programs in each school division. This group could respond to pending legislation regarding changes at the state level such as a Virginia Senate, SB 683, which proposes changes to the current graduation requirements for

ELLs. It is important that policymakers, legislators, educators, and community participation examine these changes to ensure that ELLs receive the best possible education.

Pedagogy

Educators (August & Hakuta, 1997; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 2000) have indicated that attaining Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, or (CALP), takes from five to seven years. It is, therefore, challenging to have Latino ELLs in academic content area classes become proficient in the second language within a short time and still be able to complete high school. Consideration should be given to instructional approaches in content area classes that will maximize cognitive growth and assist ELLs become successful learners in the high school.

One of the models used in this school was the inclusion model in which the ESL teacher embedded herself into the content area classes. This model can be more successful if it becomes a formalized systemic aspect of curriculum planning in the school and it becomes integral part of overall school offerings. There should be formal mechanisms for curriculum planning, joint training, shared preparation time and collaboration with whatever department is doing the inclusion with the staff of the ESL program. The ESL teacher also used informal networking with other content teachers to share information and to bring content vocabulary into the ESL classroom. This, too, should become a more formal process so that all content area teachers can work cooperatively with ESL teachers.

Another set of recommendations stem from my discussion with the school division's coordinator of ELL programs. The coordinator presented recommendations for pedagogical designs that deserve closer examination, such as: (1) establishing an Intake Center for ELLs'; (2) creating special classes where they would be awarded Carnegie Unit credits applicable towards graduation; (3) coordinating program ideas with other government units such as the city library to provide services to parents and students; and (4) creating staff development training between the school division and faculty at Virginia Tech using Virginia Tech's Higher Education Center in Green Valley to offer courses for ESL certification and, thus, augment the pool of certified teachers to accommodate the increasing educational needs of ELLs entering the schools.

Another recommendation stems from the work of professional organizations such as TESOL. Since this school and many others around the nation are including ELLs in core content areas, it is important to align ELLs' proficiency standards with the state academic content standards. TESOL produced the *ESL Standards for PreK-12 Students* in 1997, which are being

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followed in Virginia. New standards issued in 2005 aligned theory and research that reflect the need to support content-based instruction and assessment (TESOL, 2005) with second language proficiency. These new standards were an outgrowth of the World-class Instructional Design and Assessments (WIDA), a Consortium of 10 states formed in 2002. *PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards in the Core Content Areas* (2005) are written for five content areas: (1) language arts, (2) mathematics, (3) science, (4) social studies, and (5) social, intercultural and instructional. These new standards offer promising practices that might be useful to implement at this school given the increasing number of ELLs that are now coming to this state and area.

Practices

An important finding in this study was to see the importance of Latino identity formation and the acceptance or lack of acceptance by native English speakers in the school. It is my perspective that there should be a space in the school where discourse about race, racism, and diversity are legitimate topics of conversation that can lead to better understanding of all groups and acceptance of differences. An approach to professional staff development training might be framed what Gay (2000) call "pillars for progress" (p. 213), where benchmarks regarding culturally responsive pedagogy can be taught and implemented throughout the school. This training about awareness of differences and social inequality is something that could be extended to all students as well as a way of ameliorating interracial conflict. The key is to fit this type of awareness training into the school as an integral part of the school day. Sleeter and Grant (2003) state that if we do not prepare students to live in a culturally diverse society, it will be difficult to promote social justice and equality for all.

Caring is something that is not legislated or mandated. One cannot force anyone to exhibit a caring attitude toward learners. However, in this school I saw examples of authentic caring behaviors as cited in Valenzuela (1999) that enabled Latino ELLs to feel accepted and, build a reciprocal relationship between students and teachers based on *respeto,* respect, and *educación,* education, centered on respectful relationships. There are persons who could assume roles of an advocate or caring teacher. The essence is to find a person or persons committed to infusing these behaviors for everyone, including faculty and students as an integral part of the school. A commitment to this concept would be to provide the caring teachers with the resources of space, place and time to carry out their tasks.

Research Implications

From preparing the school climate to be an inclusive environment for all learners, and providing opportunities for ELLs to engage in meaningful discourse, it is important to discuss research implications for Latino ELLs' educational attainment. Again, I frame these possible research questions around the policy, pedagogy, and practices that have an impact on learning English in an academic setting.

Policy

- What alternative assessment tools can be developed to reflect learner abilities and competencies?

Pedagogy

- How does learning about the language and culture of the families ELLs help one to become a better educator?
- How does involving the learner in his or her own learning foster the ability to generate new knowledge?

Practices

- How can we engage learners to accept and value difference?
- How are attributes of caring individuals demonstrated in the teaching and learning environment?
- How different would this school look if students were given tools to learn about personal empowerment?

Final Thoughts

I began this dissertation with the prophetic words of Hays and Seeger (1958) sung by Peter, Paul, and Mary (1962) in the song, If I had a Hammer. I end with the prophetic words of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB, 2006) and the theme for National Migration Week of 2006, Journey to Justice. It is my hope that we can all journey to justice in one of the most important paths that we can give our nation and ourselves: Education for Social Justice.

Latino ELLs said it themselves:

¡Qué nos dé una chanza! Give us a chance!

Coda

Uncertain Future: The Dream Act

During my conversations with Latino ELLs the issue came up about goals and future plans. Many Latino ELLs were uncertain about what they wanted to do after completing their high school, or where they would get the resources to continue on to higher education. Others had very definite ideas that they held closely to their hearts since childhood such as wanting to be a dentist, an architect, a child psychologist, a car designer, an interpreter, to name a few. One of the challenges for Latino ELLs is how to make those dreams a reality by having access to higher education in the United States.

One promising legislative development to address this issue sponsored by Democrats and Republicans is the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors, DREAM Act, S. 2075, introduced by Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL), Senators Chuck Hagel (R-NE), and Richard Lugar (R-IN). The DREAM Act would facilitate access to postsecondary educational opportunities for immigrant students in the U. S. who currently face barriers in pursuing a college education. Perhaps this DREAM Act could make their dreams come true.