

**Policies, Pedagogy, and Practices: Educational Experiences of Latino English
Language Learners in Virginia**

Lourdes Travieso-Parker

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Judith L. Shrum, Chair

Dr. Jacqueline E. Bixler

Dr. Penny Burge

Dr. Barbara Lockee

Dr. Gresilda A. Tilley-Lubbs

March 20, 2006

Blacksburg, Virginia

Key words: Latino English Language Learners, Second Language Acquisition, Ethnic Identity,
School Climate, Caring Teacher, No Child Left Behind Act

Copyright 2006, Lourdes Travieso-Parker

Policies, Pedagogy, and Practices: Educational Experiences of Latino English Language Learners in Virginia

Abstract

Lourdes Travieso-Parker

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, the researcher examined 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 students to acquire a second language in an academic setting. This enabled the researcher to examine the contextual framework of a large urban school and factors converging to help Latino ELLs learn academic English to succeed in high school. By reviewing the policy, pedagogy, and practices used in this school, I observed the connectedness of an entire school and the relationships fostered by students and faculty to support a learning climate for ELLs.

The findings of this study show that the sociocultural environment and the educational experiences play a significant role in the adaptive process of learning a second language for Latino English language learners. Pedagogy that was built on respect for the Latino English language learners' cultural identity, linguistic abilities, and critical thinking skills helped learners become actively engaged, and facilitated learning in the second language that was academically rigorous. The practices of caring teachers enabled them to serve as advocates for ELLs, helped forge relationships of respect and trust, and encouraged Latino ELLs to succeed academically as they navigated the high school environment.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Donald W. Parker in grateful appreciation of the many years of patience, happiness, and love that he has brought to our marriage, and the loving devotion he expressed that motivated me to pursue my dreams. It is with the help of the Holy Spirit that we have been able to climb these mountains and valleys together, and it is with the Lord's help that we will continue our journey. Donald, you have given new meaning to Corinthians 13:4,8. Love is patient, love is kind. Love never fails.

¡Qué Dios te lo pague, con todo mi amor para siempre!

Acknowledgements

It is a long way from the Bronx to Blacksburg. This research study represents the culmination of many years of thinking how best to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to make wherever I may be a better place to grow and to learn. Many, many people here on earth as well as those looking from above have given me the incentive, the love, and the encouragement to move forward. It is with a humble heart that I express my appreciation to those who have walked this journey with me.

To Dr. Judith Shrum, my committee chairperson and advisor, I express my deepest appreciation for the support and guidance you have given me throughout this process. At times I felt I was walking into a firestorm but your gentle nudge prodded me to discover new knowledge, transforming me from teacher to pedagogue. You showered me with ¡*ganas!* [desire, wishes]

I also thank my other committee members: Dr. Jacqueline Bixler, Dr. Penny Burge, Dr. Barbara Lockee, and Dr. Kris Tilley-Lubbs. Each of you has given me gifts of your wisdom, encouragement, and rigor. Dr. Bixler, your contagious enthusiasm for the Spanish-speaking world enabled me to enjoy hearing the cultural nuances and seeing the beauty of cultural diversity. *Mil gracias*. Dr. Burge, you taught me to use qualitative methodology to tell a story with rigor and conviction. Thank you. Dr. Lockee, from my first year here, I sought your advice about using technology in the classroom. I realize the power it has to create new knowledge. Thank you for guiding me in this area. Dr. Tilley-Lubbs, my *madrina*, [godmother], you have inspired me to do qualitative research that captures the essence of our people and be a conduit to tell the story of *dignidad* [dignity] through their eyes. *Te lo aprecio de todo corazón*.

In addition to my committee members, I thank other faculty members who have so generously supported me throughout my years here. Dr. Jan Nespor, thank you for sharing your wisdom about ethnographic research and allowing me to discover the richness of this methodology. Dr. Barbara Pendergrass, you were always there with encouraging words and reminders that I am a daughter of the King. Dr. Rita Klein, my wonderful counselor, you were always there to help me clarify my thoughts and give me moral support. Dr. Antonio Fernández-Vázquez, my first professor in the Intensive Second Language Institute (ISLI), for your words of

encouragement and reminding me that learning is a life-long pursuit and that knowledge can never be taken away.

The richness for me of being at this campus was the opportunity to meet and interact with so many special people pursuing the same dreams of academia. There are a few persons who made my life a happier and richer experience because of their incredible insight and support. I begin with my colleague from the Bronx, my *pana*, Dr. Edwin Larroy Rodríguez. How fortunate for me to meet Edwin on my first day at Virginia Tech at the Multicultural Center. Edwin and I shared many of the same experiences growing up as Latinos and struggles to find our places in the world of academia. Your insightfulness, your tenacity, your *buen humor*, your sense of loyalty and *cariño* will go with me wherever I go. *P'lante pana*. To Dr. Dean Ravizza, my amazing friend and sports enthusiast, who shared his thoughts about caring teachers during our morning workouts at the War Memorial Gym. You are the embodiment of a caring person. *Mille grazie*. To my friend Dr. Eunsil Lee, we bonded in our classes and through our second language learners. You have inspired me with your sense of determination. I am happy to know that I have a loving friend in Korea. To Mike Shavers, thank you for preparing those wonderful desserts.

My life at Tech would not be complete without the great support, fun, enthusiasm, and plain laughter from my 7:30 a.m. Swim Buddies at the War Memorial Gym. The morning cheers and splashes helped me to keep a sense of balance. Thank you, Ladies. A special thank you to my wonderful trainers, Steve Guill, and Nadine Guignel, who helped me to push the envelope to a healthier life with exercise.

From 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. I needed a special place to come to meditate and give thanks for the many gifts I have been given. For me there was no better place than the Newman House for a time of quiet reflection with our special Latino Prayer Group: Ceci, Sebastian, David, José Manuel, Fulvia, Sandra, Adriana, Carl, and the many others. You helped to center me and maintain my spiritual focus. *Gracias, mi familia, mis compañeros*.

Being at great distance from home is a challenge. I am thankful for the many friends in Gloucester Virginia who supported my husband, Don, while he worked many long hours and encouraged us both to keep going: Kitty Squires, Joan Marble, Lisa Kight, Calvin and Rachel Rhea. Your support grounded me. I am thankful, too, for the prayers of my family of friends at the Church of St. Therese in Gloucester. Your prayers have been steadfast. The steadfast

prayers also came from my friends at the Centros Sor Isolina Ferré in Puerto Rico: Sister Rosita, Sister Margarita, Sister Mildred and Sister Sylvia. Thank you for your love and for continuing the legacy of Sister Isolina. *¡Qué Dios las bendiga!*

My life-long friends who have always been with me deserve a special place in my heart for their uncompromising support and love. To my special extended family of friends: Dr. Nilda A. Torresola, Dr. Marion Dragoon, Dr. Ken Tewel, and Dr. Lena Furgeri, thank you for being with me and for never letting me forget what the words of friendship really mean, *amistad y lealtad*.

To my fantastic family who grounded me with love and devotion: My parents Guillermo and Eloisa Travieso; my mother-in-law, Georgia Lewis Parker; my *abuela*, Lucía Travieso Aguayo; my *tía* Inez Travieso Hernandez; my *tía-prima*, Sister Isolina Ferré. Your spirits live within me and continue to guide me. To my mentors David Dragoon and Fr. Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, S. J. your kind words of wisdom were not lost on me. To my immediate family Clemon Lewis and Charlotte Parker, thanks for keeping the family holiday spirits going while I struggled with completing this work. To my beautiful goddaughter, Camille Campos, thank you for sending me the loving e-mails of encouragement and cheering me on to finish the race.

Special thanks of gratitude go to the wonderful people of the school division who allowed me to conduct this research in their school, especially Mrs. Barbara Carper, for her valuable vision. To the magnificent administrators and faculty of the high school where I conducted this study, thank you for opening the doors and sharing your insights with me about how to help English language learners find a place to learn. An immense gratitude goes to Mrs. Dee White, for allowing me into your classroom and for sharing your wisdom about teaching English language learners. You are the epitome of the *caring* teacher and devotion to your work. The world needs more teachers like you. You give meaning to the word, *respeto*.

Words are not enough to convey the gratitude and respect I have for the Latino ELLs who so candidly shared their stories of courage, insight, tenacity, and vision. It is wonderful to hear the voices of Latino youth. I pray that I did their words justice. *Gracias con respeto y amor*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Figures.....	xiii
List of Tables.....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction.....	1
The Latino Presence in the United States.....	1
Cultural Division.....	2
Backlash Pedagogy.....	3
The Latino Diaspora.....	3
Virginia’s Latino Diaspora.....	4
Green Valley’s Diaspora.....	4
Challenges of the New Latino Diaspora.....	5
Assessment and Accountability Issues.....	5
Theoretical Framework.....	6
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Research Questions.....	7
Justification for the Study.....	8
My Personal and Professional Journey.....	9
New York.....	9
Philadelphia.....	10
My Return to New York.....	10
Chicago.....	10
Virginia.....	11
My Faith Journey.....	11
Definitions of Key Terms.....	12
Chapter One Summary.....	14
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review.....	16

Policies.....	16
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001(NCLB) Act (2001) P.L. 107-110.....	16
Summary of NCLB Act of 2001	17
Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students	18
Criticism Focuses on NCLB Act (2001).....	19
Reactions to Criticisms	20
Precedents of the No Child Left Behind Act	22
Power and Pedagogy.....	24
Assimilation and Pluralism.....	24
Pluralism: The Binary of Assimilation	25
Selected Policy Events Affecting Education of ELLs	25
Language Acquisition.....	28
Chomsky and Universal Grammar.....	28
Krashen’s Monitor Model.....	29
Gass and Selinker, The Interlanguage Theory	30
Cummins, Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills	30
Vygotsky, Sociocultural Theory and ZPD.....	31
Pedagogical Approaches.....	31
Critical Pedagogy.....	32
Critical Pedagogy is Liberating	32
Critical Pedagogy is Power.....	33
Critical Pedagogy Combats Hegemony	33
Critical Pedagogy is Evolutionary	33
Transformative Pedagogy Creates Conditions of Collaborative Empowerment.....	34
Pedagogy and English Language Learners.....	34
Funds of Knowledge.....	34
Hybridity.....	35
Repertoires of Practice.....	35
Critical Cultural Awareness.....	35
Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist.....	36

Backward Design	36
Practices	37
Role of Language Associations in Developing Second Language Standards	37
Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21 st Century	37
The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL).....	38
TESOL PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards in the Core Content Areas...	39
Virginia’s Standards of Learning (SOL).....	40
Foreign Language Standards.....	40
English Proficiency Standards	40
Chapter Two Summary	41
CHAPTER THREE: Methodology.....	44
Justification for use of Qualitative Methods.....	44
Holistic View	44
Reflexivity.....	45
Limitations of the Study.....	46
Site Selection	46
Entry into the Field	47
Participant Selection	47
Data Sources and Collection Procedures	49
Interviews.....	50
Observations	51
Transcriptions	53
Document Review.....	53
Data Analysis	53
Triangulation.....	54
Member Checks	54
Peer/Colleague Examination.....	54
Ethical Issues	54
Document Analysis.....	55
Summary of Methodology	55
CHAPTER FOUR: Findings: Sociocultural Environment for Latino ELLs	56

The Contextual Framework of the Study.....	57
Adaptation to a New Setting.....	58
Adapting to School Culture	59
Feeling Out of Place.....	59
Summary of Adapting to a New Setting.....	61
School Climate.....	62
School Policies.....	63
Counseling	63
School Discipline Policies	65
Extracurricular Activities.....	66
Summary of Extra Curricular Activities.....	67
Academic and Mentoring Leadership Roles.....	68
Academic Excellence.....	69
Summary of School Climate.....	69
Racial and Ethnic Identity.....	70
Ethnic Identity and Diversity	70
Puerto Rican Identity	72
Summary of Racial and Ethnic Identity.....	74
Interracial Conflict.....	75
Summary of Interracial Conflict.....	76
Latinos Unidos, [United Latinos]	77
Mexican and Mexican American: Inter-Ethnic Conflict	78
Latino Distinctive Characteristics.....	79
Summary of Ethnic Identity, Interracial Conflict, and Latinos Unidos.....	80
Summary of Chapter Four	81
CHAPTER FIVE: Findings: Teaching and Learning Environment for Latino ELLs	83
Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	83
Policies in Place for NCLB Act and Latino ELLs.....	83
Virginia’s Department of Education and NCLB	84
School Division’s Implementation of NCLB and Programs for ELLs.....	84
Criticism of NCLB Act in Virginia	86

Summary of School Division’s NCLB Activities.....	87
High School’s Implementation of NCLB Activities for Latino ELLs.....	87
Summary of NCLB Policies at the High School Level	88
Strategies for Success in Second Language Acquisition Classes	89
Second Language Acquisition in Mainstream Classes	90
Leadership Roles.....	90
Small Group Instruction.....	91
Peer Assistance	92
Earth Science Classes	92
Earth Science: One Latino ELL Student.....	93
Earth Science Class with Multiple Latino ELLs.....	93
Public Speaking Class Using Rubrics.....	94
Inclusion Model	95
Computer Drafting Class: Learn by Doing.....	97
Summary of Second Language Acquisition in Mainstream Classes	99
Transformative Pedagogy in the ESL Classroom.....	99
Climate and Structure of the ESL Classroom: Animated and Academically Rigorous	100
Classroom Space.....	101
Weaving Academic English in the ESL Classroom	101
Animated Communication	102
Summary of Climate and Structure of the ESL Classroom	103
Critical Pedagogy: I-Movie.....	104
Crossing the Borders of Latino Cultures	107
Summary of Critical Pedagogy I-Movie.....	107
Responsive Practices of Caring Teachers	108
Students’ Voices	108
Summary of Responsive Practices of Caring Teachers	111
Chapter Five Summary of Findings.....	111
CHAPTER SIX: Summary Discussions and Implications	114
Research Questions.....	114
Findings.....	114

Policies of NCLB and Latino ELLs.....	115
Adaptation to a New Setting and School Climate	115
Second Language Acquisition in Mainstream Classes	116
Pedagogy in the ESL Classroom.....	116
Caring Teachers	117
Implications of the Study	117
Policies of NCLB and Latino ELLs.....	118
Pedagogy.....	118
Practices	119
Recommendations of the Study	120
Policies.....	120
Pedagogy.....	121
Practices	122
Research Implications.....	123
Policy	123
Pedagogy.....	123
Practices	123
Final Thoughts	123
Coda: Uncertain Future: The Dream Act.....	124
References.....	125
Appendix A: Informed Consent for Participant.....	139
Appendix B: Parent Permission Form (English)	142
Appendix C: Parent Permission Form (Spanish).....	144
Appendix D: Student Assent Form (English)	147
Appendix E: Student Assent Form (Spanish)	149
Appendix F: Division Coordinator Interview Protocol	151
Appendix G: Principal and Administrator Interview Protocol	152
Appendix H: Guidance Counselor Interview Protocol	153
Appendix I: ELL Teacher Interview Protocol	154
Appendix J: Content Area Teacher Protocol	156
Appendix K: Latino ELLs Focus Group Interview Protocol.....	157

Appendix L: Latino ELLs Interview Protocol.....	158
Appendix M: Classroom Observation Guide.....	160
Appendix N: Venn Diagram.....	161
Appendix O: Classroom Seating Chart.....	162
Appendix P: Cummins’ Framework for Academic Language Learning.....	163
Appendix Q: Rosalinda: I Like to be a Famous Children Psychologist.....	164
Appendix R: Ana: I Dream About Peace.....	165
Appendix S: Lucía: Poem on Friendship.....	166
Appendix T: Lucía: Computer assisted design of My Dream House.....	167
Appendix U: ELL Teacher: My Story Guideline and Rubric.....	168
Appendix V: Hugo: Artistic Talent.....	171
Appendix W: Journey to Justice.....	172
Curriculum Vitae.....	173

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Research point of entry and focal points.....	15
Figure 2. Factors Affecting the Education of Latino English Language Learners (ELLs).....	57

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001): Key Provisions and Applicability to English Language Learners.....	22
Table 2.2. Selected Actions Affecting Educational Policy Decisions.....	23
Table 2.3. Selected Policy Events and Actions Affecting English Language Learners.....	26
Table 3.1. Characteristics of Latino English Language Learners.....	48
Table 3.2. Summary of Research Procedures, Question No. 1.....	49
Table 3.3. Summary of Research Procedures, Question No. 2.....	50
Table 6.1. Impact of the NCLB Act (2001) on Teaching and Learning for Latino ELLs.....	115