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ARTICLE

School Desegregation, Linguistic Segregation and Access to English for Latino Students

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Introduction

Latino/Hispano students have advocated for equal educational opportunity through desegregation efforts across the nation; yet their segregation, unlike that of Blacks, has been steadily on the increase. This article proposes that educational reforms designed for Latino students must address the denial of equal educational opportunity as experienced by Latinos, and that the discussion of equal educational opportunity for Latinos must go beyond a dualistic approach which views school desegregation remedies within a Black/White paradigm. I maintain that access to English is an integral component of the learning opportunity denied many Latino students. Few desegregation remedies have been tailored to their unique cultural and linguistic characteristics. I will explore the concept of linguistic segregation as an indicator of Latino student access to English in schools; then I will review the importance that access to English has for English Language Learners and relate this to linguistically relevant educational reforms. First, a very brief history of Latino student participation in desegregation efforts is presented.

Latino Participation in School Desegregation Efforts

Historically, school desegregation and integration efforts have been viewed within a Black-White paradigm (Bowman 2001), and the role of Latinos as both advocates and members of the plaintiff class has been obscured. Historians have documented that Latinos have been attending segregated schools since the early twentieth century, and have litigated against mandatory segregation since the 1910's (Gonzales, 1999; Wollenberg, 1978). "Mexican schools" were maintained on the grounds that the separation was beneficial to Mexican American children, separating them from Anglo students in order to address their language needs. It was said that Mexican children had a language handicap, needed to learn English and be Americanized before mixing with Anglos. The reasoning was that in separate schools Mexican American children would overcome these deficiencies and be protected from competition with Anglos. These "Mexican schools" often had very inferior facilities, poorly qualified teachers and larger classes. Spanish surnamed students were routinely assigned to Mexican schools, even though they were fluent in English (Carter, 1970).

The Mexican community protested inferior schooling practices through the courts. As early as 1931, Mexican parents challenged the segregation of children in Lemon Grove, California. Although the de jure segregation of Mexican students should have ended with *Mendez v. Westminster* in 1947, in reality the school segregation of Mexican students has increased over the decades, so that today Latino students are more segregated than any other minority group (Frankenberg, Lee, and Orfield, 2003). The history of segregative practices experienced by Mexican American students in the Southwest has been documented by Grebler, Moore and Guzman (1970). Wollenberg (1978) provided a comprehensive history of segregation in California and San Miguel (1987) in Texas. Decades of segregative experiences in Los Angeles were presented by Caughey (1973). Arias (1992) outlined fifteen years of desegregation compliance in San Jose California, and Donato, Menchaca and Valencia (1991) have documented school segregation in the Southwest.

Latinos have been advocates in court desegregation cases pre- and post-Brown. The most significant post-Brown cases have been *Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District* in Texas (1970)

and *Keyes v. School District Number One*, in Denver, Colorado (1975). These cases are important because they focused on multiracial districts where Latinos were a significant minority group, and they held that Latinos should be considered distinct from Whites in the context of school desegregation, thus setting the stage for a specific remedy (Bowman 2001; San Miguel, 1987). In the *Cisneros* case, the Corpus Christi school district had a composition of nearly half Latino, half White and 4% African American. The court held that *Brown* protected Latino students and that the segregation of both non-white groups resulted in a constitutionally impermissibly dual school system. In the *Cisneros* case, Mexicans were classified as an identifiable minority; they no longer were to be considered as “other white.” Previous to *Cisneros*, Mexicans had been defined or “raced” as “white” thereby allowing for desegregation remedies to combine Mexicans with Whites, for purposes of reaching the required integration ratios.

The *Keyes* case focused on Denver, a multiracial school district in 1972 which was 66% White, 14% African American and 20% Latino. The Supreme Court had to decide what remedy to apply to Mexican American students. Would the Court only desegregate blacks or would it recognize that Mexican Americans students had also been denied equal educational access? Previously, the Supreme Court and other district courts had desegregated only blacks, ignoring the segregation of Hispanics, even when it was clearly present (Orfield, 1978).

The Court held that *Keyes* should consider African American and Latinos to be part of the same group for purposes of school desegregation.

...there is also much evidence that in the Southwest Hispanics and Negroes have a great many things in common... Though of different origins, Negroes and Hispanos in Denver suffer identical discrimination in treatment when compared with the treatment afforded Anglo students. In that circumstance, we think petitioners are entitled to have schools with a combined predominance of Negroes and Hispanos included in the category of “segregated schools.” (*Keyes, v. School District #1, Denver CO, 413 U.S. 189 (1973)*)

This interpretation created more confusion than clarification; by combining two aggrieved groups and confounding disparate histories, the court imposed a “sameness” that was inaccurate. The court’s finding that Latinos and African Americans had suffered “identical” discrimination limited the remedies that could be ordered. *Keyes* states that Latinos were like blacks and should be accorded the same rights. “The conclusion that a group facing linguistic barriers and less interested in desegregation was the same as the local black population was simplistic” (Orfield, 1978 p.203).

Bowman (2001), in discussing how courts have defined remedies for Latinos, noted that in the *Keyes* decision, the court found that Latinos were similar to Blacks because they had suffered discriminatory practices similar to African Americans. Latinos had been denied educational access, so they were similarly situated to benefit from remedies to address that discrimination. Yet the Court failed to explain how the discriminatory practices shared by Blacks and Latinos were similar or different or to suggest that there could be similar or different remedies. This finding contributed to the complexity of designing desegregation remedies in multiracial districts, because it ran contrary to current practice.

It is important for the courts to recognize the historical differences and origins of segregative practices experienced by African Americans and Latinos so that different groups can benefit from *Brown*. Despite the fact that Latino students have participated in school desegregation remedies across the nation, few integration plans have included reforms specifically designed to redress the segregative practices they have endured – specifically, limited access to English. School desegregation plans in multiracial school districts have largely overlooked educational remedies which specifically addressed the needs of Latino students. To some extent, this was due to the fact that the civil rights struggle had

been framed in dualistic terms: exclusion of Blacks from White educational opportunities. Thus with the emergence of an additional aggrieved group, Latinos, most civil rights activists were leery of any remedy that might entail an aspect of “separate but equal.” The *Keyes* decisions did not provide guidance for the development of remedies specific to the isolation and exclusion Latinos had experienced.

In the decades following *Keyes*, many school districts with Latino student populations designed student integration plans as part of court-ordered desegregation. In some districts, bilingual education was excluded from desegregation plans; in other cases, bilingual education was provided as part of the remedy. In some settings no accommodations were made for the LEP population. For example, Los Angeles Unified School District, implementing its desegregation plan in 1978, bused mostly Latino and Black students across town, implemented magnet schools and allowed a limited number of Latino ELL students to transfer to schools with bilingual programs. In San Jose, California in 1986 the goal was to eliminate racially identifiable schools through cross-town bussing and programs for ELL students were not exempted. In Chicago’s desegregation plan in 1982, special educational programs for ELLs were not considered, and in Boston in 1974, plans were made to preserve the bilingual programs. There was no consistent approach. It took another Supreme Court case to define the rights of language learners, including Latino ELL students in schools.

***Lau v. Nichols* and Language Rights**

In his case study of school desegregation efforts in the Bay Area, Kirp (1982) noted that San Francisco’s desegregation order had triggered Asian and Latino concern for equality of educational opportunity fueling the efforts to provide Court mandated educational opportunities to Chinese students who did not speak English. The *Lau v. Nichols* decision is the only Supreme Court decision to deal specifically with the meaning of equal educational opportunity as applied to linguistic minorities (Salomone, 1986). In the *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) decision, the Court held that public schools had to provide an education that was comprehensible to Limited English Proficient students (LEP). Because English was the only vehicle of instruction, LEP children were being denied access to a meaningful experience. LEP children could not benefit from education that was conducted exclusively in English, effectively precluding the participation of many Latino LEP students. The Court found that since mastery of English is part of the requirement of the school:

there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum...we know, that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful. (*Lau v Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 at 566 (1974))

This decision impacted the education of all language minority students in the country. For the first time, the Court focused on the content of instruction as a measure of equal access, but the Justices failed to order any specific remedy and left unanswered which educational approaches were permissible or mandated:

Teaching English to the students of Chinese ancestry who do not speak the language is one choice, giving instruction to this group in Chinese is another. There may be others. Petitioner asks only that the Board of education be directed to apply its expertise to the problem and rectify the situations. (*Lau v. Nichols* at 565)

New educational reforms for Latino students were anticipated as a result of the *Lau v. Nichols* decision in 1974, and the spotlight on school desegregation remedies shifted to remedies providing access to bilingual educational services. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)

had originally used desegregation cases brought by blacks as a vehicle for winning bilingual-bicultural curricula. However, this strategy failed in the Keyes remedy phase, when the court held that bilingual education was not a substitute for desegregation. Thereafter, MALDEF switched its strategy to litigating for bilingual education reform rather than desegregation. With the spotlight on bilingual education as the vehicle for addressing language rights for Latino students, it became unclear how desegregation remedies could benefit Latinos. Some argued that bilingual education and desegregation were incompatible, others that segregating students for bilingual education further exacerbated their isolation. There was no common vision calling for language rights as part of equal educational opportunity.

Bilingual education, as mandated and supported by the Federal Government in Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and later as Title III of No Child Left Behind (2001), became a focal point as a civil rights remedy for Latinos. Crawford (2002) noted that bilingual education became a matter of self-determination, an assertion of ethnic pride and a pedagogical approach to which high hopes were attached:

Wherever language minorities were concentrated, school officials began to feel community pressure to adopt bilingual methods. Several districts became the target of lawsuits by parents, who argued that failure to address students' language needs meant failure to provide them an equal opportunity to learn. (p 8)

Between 1975 and 1981 over 500 school districts, found to be violating the civil rights of ELL students, mandated bilingual education as a remedy. Hand in hand, with the mandate for implementation came the mandate for accountability, and the question of the efficacy of the bilingual education approaches. Did/does bilingual education work? Gandara et.al (2004) find:

Most schools were no more prepared to provide high-quality bilingual programs overnight, than they had been to desegregate their student body 20 years earlier. And yet social scientists began testing students after they had been involved in bilingual program for a few months to measure whether achievement gaps had closed. When it was discovered that English learners-- often immigrants and among the poorest of children in the schools--had not caught up to their English-speaking, middle-class peers, the "experiment" was deemed a failure. (p 38)

After three decades of program evaluation the debate over bilingual education has not subsided. As Crawford (2004) has noted:

"Whether bilingual instruction provides an antidote for school failure, whether it teaches English effectively, whether it safeguards children's rights under *Lau*...these question are usually left to specialists....few members of the public seem interested...." (p 13)

For all the attention that bilingual education has received, it is noteworthy that it has benefited only a small percentage of ELLs. Noting the limited coverage of Title VII programs, Wise and Garcia (2001) estimated that competitive grants served approximately 500,000 eligible ELLs, out of an estimated 3.5 million nationwide. It is far more common to find that ELL students do not receive special instructional services. Olsen (1988) found in California that 75% of the LEP student population received minimal, if any instructional support in their native language.

The political salience of bilingual education has begun to ebb with the emergence of the English Only movement coupled with a public which is hostile to immigrant students and racial minorities. Concurrently, the mandate for desegregation has weakened with the dismantling of *Brown*. According to Orfield (1996)

Brown has been stripped of much of its power and reach by subsequent Supreme Court decisions, by political maneuvers, and by the cumulative effects of uninformed, but often intense, public debate. (p xv)

While both *Brown* and *Lau* appear to have lost some of their legal supports, the vision of equal opportunity through schooling remains even more salient as resegregation and increasing segregation of Latinos surges across the nation.

The last two decades have transformed the demography of every school district across the nation, so that Latino students are represented in every state of the country. Along with increasing numbers, has come increasing segregation. Latino students, English Language Learners and fluent English speakers have become the fastest growing and most highly segregated minority group in the nation (Orfield and Lee 2004). Today, the increasing segregation of Latino students in schools and communities makes access to English (in and out of school) problematic.

Latino Enrollment Today

Demographic Transformation

It has been widely reported that the 2000 Census found that the percentage of individuals who identified themselves as Latinos increased 60% since 1990 and that Latinos are now the largest minority group in the U.S. The national balance tipped in 1998 when Latino students comprised a greater percentage of the school-age population than African Americans. This population shift has already occurred in Hawaii, New Mexico and California; Texas, Arizona, New York, Nevada, New Jersey and Maryland will quickly follow.

The increase in the Latino population has occurred across the country but has been most evident in the West. The largest absolute change occurred in California, with Latino enrollment burgeoning from approximately 700,000 in 1970 to over 2.6 million in 2000. The Latino student enrollment grew by over one million students in Texas, 200,000 in Arizona, 75,000 in Colorado and 50,000 in New Mexico. Other states have also had similar growth. For example, Illinois experienced a 300% increase in its Latino student enrollment, New Jersey had a 240% increase, New York a 68% increase. Data provided by Frankenberg, Lee and Orfield (2003) show that the highest rate of growth in Latino enrollment in the last thirty years was in Florida with an increase from 1970 of 614%.

Increasing Segregation

Since the 1960's the Latino population has been experiencing rising segregation with no significant desegregation efforts outside a handful of large districts (Orfield and Lee, 2004). Nationally, the Latino share of public school enrollment has tripled since 1968. The data studied by Orfield and his group found that since 1986 in almost every school district, black and Latino students have become more racially segregated from whites in their schools. Currently the average Latino student goes to school where less than 30 percent of the school population is white. In 2000, by several measures, Latinos were the most segregated minority group in the Northeast and Western regions.

The percentage of Latinos in predominately minority schools has steadily increased since the 1960's and actually exceeded that of blacks in the 1980s. Massey and Denton (1992) referred to the fact that in 1992 one-third of all African Americans in the U.S. lived in conditions of intense racial segregation. Today Latinos join African Americans as the most racially isolated groups in the U.S. The percentage of Latinos in predominately minority schools is slightly higher than that of blacks (76% for Latinos, 72% for Blacks), and seven out of ten black and Latino students attend predominately minority

schools. According to Orfield (1996), the most serious segregation is in the large central cities. In urban areas, fifteen of every sixteen African American and Latino students are in schools where most of the students are nonwhite.

This enrollment increase has been felt most profoundly at the school district level, where districts are sorely pressed to provide the educational resources needed to support Latino students. Some of the largest school districts in the nation, including New York, Prince George's County and Miami-Dade had the highest level of Latino segregation in 2000. As the concentration of Latino students has increased in the inner cities, so has their concentration in schools, making segregation more prevalent than ever. Consequently, Latino students are more isolated from white students than the average black students. More Latinos than ever are attending intensely segregated schools -- 90-100% minority. 37% of all Latino students in 2000 attended intensely segregated schools. Minority schools are highly correlated with high-poverty schools and these schools are also associated with low parental involvement, lack of resources, less experienced and credentialed teachers and higher teacher turnover—all which exacerbate educational inequality for minority students.

The increase in the Latino population has also resulted in an increase in the English Language Learner (ELL) population. Between 1992 and 2002 the ELL student population increased 72%, with an estimated 3,977,819 students in grades K-12. Spanish language students represented 76.9 percent of all ELL students. ELL students represented about 8.4 percent of the national school population in 2002 (Parrish, et.al 2004). ELL students are estimated to be approximately 40% of the Latino population. ELL Latino students are in more highly segregated settings than non-ELL students. According to Orfield (2001), ELLs who are Latino attend schools where over 60% of students are Latino, compared to the average Latino who attends a school where 54% of the students are Latino.

Concentration in Urban Schools

A recent study by Cosentino de Cohen, Deterding and Clewell,(2005) found ELLs (Limited English Proficient students) to be highly concentrated in a few schools. “ Nearly 70% of K-5 LEP students are enrolled in 10 percent of elementary schools” (p. 14). These high LEP schools were likely to be in urban centers, with larger enrollments, class sizes, greater racial and ethnic diversity, higher incidences of student poverty, student health problems, tardiness, difficulty filling teacher vacancies, greater reliance on unqualified teachers and lower levels of parent involvement. High LEP schools also were more likely than Low-LEP schools to offer Title I services, remedial programs, pre-K, enrichment, after-school and summer school programs. Furthermore, when the concentration of ELL students increased in schools, the percentage of fully credentialed teachers, prepared to serve them, decreased. For example, five years after the implementation of Proposition 227 in California, 95 percent of teachers in schools with less than 20 percent ELLs were fully credentialed, in contrast with 87 percent of teachers in schools with 61 percent or more ELLs:

When looking at the ratio of teachers with specialized training in EL instruction, we observed a significantly higher ratio in schools with less concentration of ELs. The disparity in teacher resources is even greater looking at ELD and SDAIE credentials...(p 17)

Linguistic Isolation in Households

The concept of “linguistic isolation” was developed in preparation for the 1990 Census in order to provide estimates of the numbers and characteristics of households which might need assistance to communicate with government and social services, for example to follow instructions from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the event of a disaster. (Seigel, et al 2001). Researchers at the Census bureau stated that linguistic isolation could serve as a barrier to receipt of medical and

social services. Linguistic isolation is dependent up the English speaking ability of all adults in a household: a household is linguistically isolated if all adults speak a language other than English and none speaks English “very well”. A linguistically isolated household is one in which no person aged 14 or over speaks English at least “very well”. That is, no person aged 14 or over speaks only English at home, or speaks another language at home and speaks English “very well”. In other words, all members 14 years old and over have at least some difficulty with English. It was of interest for the Census to identify people who do not have a strong command of English and who do not have someone in their household to help them on a regular basis because it reasoned that “linguistically isolated” persons are at a disadvantage in their ability to receive services and perform daily activities.

Linguistic Isolation on the Increase

In 1990 Census data reported that 2.9 million households and 7.7 million people lived in “linguistically isolated households”. In the decade between 1990 and 2000 the number of persons residing in linguistically isolated households increased significantly to 4.4 million households including 11.9 million people. The states reporting the highest numbers of linguistically isolated households in 2000 were Arizona, California, Florida Illinois, New York and Texas. The total number of Spanish speaking children ages 5-17 residing in linguistically isolated household was close to 1.5 million. The communities (of 100,000 or more) with the highest number of persons age 5-17 who resided in linguistically isolated households included East Los Angeles, El Monte and Santa Ana in California; Hialeah and Miami in Florida; Elizabeth in New Jersey; Brownsville, El Paso, Laredo and McAllen in Texas.

Portes and Rumbaut (1996) have characterized the dynamics of linguistic isolation as part of immigrant settlement patterns:

Working-class immigrants who cluster in certain areas give rise to homogeneous ethnic neighborhoods that help preserve mother-tongue monolingualism among adults. Their children are likely to be limited bilinguals because they are insufficiently exposed to English, as is the case with recent arrivals, or to full use of the mother tongue, as is the case with the U.S born. (p 227)

They identify three major challenges to educational attainment and future career success by children of immigrants. The first is the persistence of racial discrimination, the second is the bifurcation of the US labor market and its growing inequality and the third is the consolidation of a marginalized population in the inner city.

The third external challenge confronting children of immigrants is that the social context they encounter in American schools and neighborhood may promote a set of undesirable outcomes such as dropping out of school, joining youth gangs, or participating in the drug subculture. This alternative path has been labeled downward assimilation because the learning of new cultural patterns and entry into American social circles does not lead in these cases to upward mobility but to exactly the opposite. (p 248)

The increasing linguistic isolation of Latinos students is clear, and the educational consequences are far reaching. Constantino de Cohen and her colleagues, affirm that “the segregation of LEP students results in their isolation from the educational mainstream and the attendant loss of the benefits of interacting with English-speaking classmates: and a loss for English dominant students” (p 16). Furthermore, they state:

The extremely high concentration of LEP student in urban schools forces us to define their

education within an urban context. ...it is difficult to separate the effects of urbanicity and its attendant demographics—poverty, racial and ethnic diversity, teacher shortages, large enrollment—from the effects of LEP students and their needs. It is a two way street: LEP students' special needs may exacerbate educational challenges in urban schools, while the conditions present in urban schools may complicate the educational opportunities of LEP students. (p 16)

Certainly, with regard to exposure to English, Latino ELL students are on a dead-end street. When these students go to school, they attend schools which are predominately Latino and get “tracked” into ESL ghettos, where their exposure to native English speaking peers is further compromised. Where is the opportunity for the necessary social contact with English speakers in the community or in the school?

We are currently situated in a time when hundreds of school districts across the nation, with significant segments of Latino students, have implemented desegregation plans -- plans which made no provisions for ELL students, originally filed in the 1980's and still under supervision of a court or the U.S. Department of Justice. Other school districts have dismantled their desegregation plans, like Denver in 1995 and San Jose in 2003, only to have the surge in the Latino population further accelerate the trend toward increasing segregation by race and language (Lee, 2006). Given that Latino ELL students are concentrated in inner-city schools marked by poverty, low-performance, and limited resources, we have apparently returned to a de facto imposition of “Mexican schools.” Today's inner-city schools resemble the Mexican schools of the 1930's, where Latino ELL students struggle to acquire English, isolated from their English speaking peers in ESL ghettos (Valdes 2001).

I have sketched the legal framework which assures that Latino students have a right to equal educational opportunity and a right to access the language of instruction. I have also documented that the demographic transformation of the last two decades has made the Latino population the nation's largest minority and that the majority of Latino students continue to experience segregation in schools and “linguistic isolation” in communities. Now, we turn to consider the educational consequences of the linguistic segregation of Latino students.

Access to English: Addressing Linguistic Segregation

Learning English is a primary concern for Latino ELLs; yet the setting in which they reside and attend school preclude optimal exposure to English. In a recent study of California's ELLs, Guifford and Valdes (2006) found that:

It is only through language acquisition that students can become full participants in their community. We are not suggesting that all Hispanic students are ELLs; in fact, many have sufficient proficiency in English to participate in all-English mainstream classrooms. However, in instances where such fluent English speaking Hispanic students attend schools populated mainly by Hispanic ELLs, they face a burden that few other students must deal with: functioning as English language informants, models, and mentors to their classmates while performing as exemplary students themselves. (p 126)

These researchers looked at the distribution of the Hispanic student population in 5,537 elementary schools in California, rank ordering them by the percent Hispanic enrollment. They found that ELL students were more highly concentrated in segregated schools than Hispanic students, noting that 23.8% of California's Hispanic elementary students attend schools that are 85% or more Hispanic, whereas almost 30% of the Spanish ELL students attend schools that are 85% or more Hispanic.

One of the educational consequences of segregation in schools and in communities is that most Latino ELL students do not have the exposure to English of their non-ELL counterparts:

The exposure of ELLs to even the most familiar words and expressions in English is shallow in comparison with that of most native speakers. Their (native speaker) knowledge of English reflects a wide range of common experiences and is based on a deep foundation of thousands of encounters with language used in meaningful contexts over the four to five years before formal school begins. (Gibbons, 2002, p 106)

Access to English is critical for students of non-English backgrounds, whose future is linked to English acquisition. Valdes (2001) has pointed out that schools which are successful at creating contexts for access to English will determine to a large extent how quickly and how well these students will acquire English. In order to be able to use English to communicate in school settings and to use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways, students need to interact with native language speakers.

It is essential to understand the opportunities to use English to which ELL students are exposed. Latino ELLs residing in urban linguistically isolated households probably have much less exposure to social situations in which they interact with native speakers. Language learning is a socially embedded process occurring in a cultural and situational context. According to this view, interaction is at the heart of the learning process, and the classroom is the primary site for learning English. Learners' are "apprenticed" into the broader understanding and language of the curriculum.

The idea of apprenticeship into a culture is particularly relevant in an ESL context where in order to participate in society, students must learn to control the dominant genres and ways of thinking through which that culture is constructed (Gibbons 2002). In preparing classrooms for ESL students, Gibbons has stressed the importance of talk for ELL learners. She stresses that in teacher led instruction ELL students get fewer chances to speak and say little when they do:

But allowing talk is not enough. Productive talk does not just happen—it needs to be deliberately and systematically planned...we have seen how opportunities to talk are set up can have significant effects on how the discourse is played out. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that classroom talk determines whether or not children learn...Talk is how education happens! (p 38)

According to Fillmore (1991), one of the necessary ingredients for second language learning to occur is "a social setting which brings learners and target language (TL) speakers into frequent enough contact to make language learning possible" p 52. Yet the case has been made that most Latino ELLs are isolated in their communities, in their neighborhoods and in their schools and classrooms. Consequently, many students are limited in their access to the very medium they require to succeed. Gifford and Valdes conclude:

Our analysis of the hypersegregation of Hispanic students, and particularly Spanish-speaking ELLs, suggests that little or no attention has been given to the consequences of linguistic isolation for a population whose future depends on the acquisition of English...For ELLs, interaction with ordinary English-speaking peers is essential to their English language development and consequently to their acquisition of academic English. (p 147)

Linguistically Relevant Educational Reforms

Educational reforms for Latino ELLs whether through desegregation efforts or bilingual education must bring explicit attention to the opportunities for access to English provided ELLs. In this regard, it

is useful to begin with consideration of the development of a school's language policy for addressing access to English. Corson (1999) has elaborated on the importance and utility for schools to set language policies. He maintains that language policies will assist in the identification of the schools' language problems and find and agree on solutions to those problems. For example, a language policy would be a means for fact-finding: understanding the distribution of language(s) in the community, determining teachers' understanding of students' linguistic repertoires, setting out a professional development agenda. It would also make very explicit opportunities for students to use English in a purposeful way. For example Corson states:

A language policy at elementary or middle school level might mention the kinds of oral language methods that teachers agree to use in their work with individuals, groups, or whole classes....some language policies list the key activities, or setting in the school., where oral language work become central to learning. (p 125)

According to Corson, a school's language policy is its learning policy, because in schools language is the medium or instruction, it is the content of instruction and it provides the pedagogical means by which that instruction is realized. Every school outcome depends upon the English language ability of the students. Furthermore, Corson finds that it is important to determine the linguistic context in which students live:

The language all around students teaches them who they are, what their place is in the world, and what they need to do to become autonomous and valuable citizens. If they are unable to interact with those discourses with critical insight, they will be less autonomous and so they will become a burden to others. Language development is empowering for people.... (p 133)

Towards an Empowering Pedagogy

As we come to understand the educational consequences of linguistic segregation for ELLs, we must closely examine the opportunities for structured and systematic learning of English. We must look at schooling practices which have contributed to the linguistic segregation of ELLs and eliminate them and replace them with a pedagogy that defines the classroom as a community of learners. Garcia (2005) refers to this as a pedagogy of empowerment:

A responsive pedagogy expands students' knowledge beyond their own immediate experiences while using those experiences as a sound foundation for appropriating new knowledge. (p 76)

He characterizes the school-wide and teacher practices which characterize this pedagogy. Included in the school-wide practices are a school vision which values diversity, and professional collaboration and teacher practices which focus on language development through meaningful interactions and communications.

Valdes (2001) suggests a critical pedagogy for ELL students, one which changes the ways students understand their lives and the possibilities with which they are presented. She suggests critical language study as an orientation toward language that highlights how language convention and practices are invested with power relations and ideological processes. To paraphrase Valdes, we can no longer pretend that our programs, our "ESL ghettos" and the isolation of ELL students is neutral. The teaching and learning of English by ELLs has become politicized.

Our future and the future of millions of Latino ELL students is at stake. If we want to develop the full intellectual potential of Latino ELL students, we must be sure that the vision of *Brown* and *Lau* is not an illusion. By recognizing the educational consequences of linguistic segregation, we are taking a

first step toward that reality.

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