

A Speech Community Model of Bilingual Education: Educating Latino Newcomers in the USA

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With the rapid increase in immigration from Latin America to the USA, many US high schools are struggling with the thorny question of how best to educate newcomer immigrant youth with low levels of English proficiency. This paper examines what some might consider an anachronistic educational model – a segregated bilingual high school for Latino newcomers. Drawing on a qualitative case study of an unusually successful high school in Washington Heights, New York City, the paper argues that the school's vision of second language acquisition as *a social process building on the speech community itself, and not just as the individual psycholinguistic process of students*, is the key to its success. The paper specifies the factors characterising this speech community model of bilingual education. This school's anomalous success educating its immigrant Spanish-speaking population holds important lessons for the schooling of immigrant youth in an era of standards.

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Introduction

How does a high school take a group of newly arrived immigrant youth who cannot speak (much less read or write) much English and, within a few short years, educate them so that the vast majority are able to pass demanding standardised examinations in content areas such as maths, science, history and English? How does such a school achieve a drop-out rate significantly lower than the local average for comparable students, a graduation rate significantly higher than the local average for comparable students, and an excellent attendance record and college acceptance rate?

In this paper, we present a case study of a high school that has achieved such results: Gregorio Luperón High School,¹ in the predominantly Dominican neighbourhood of Washington Heights, New York City. Differing significantly from not only the widespread model of the integrated comprehensive high school that caters to all groups, but also from the more linguistically integrated bilingual education models favoured by recent educational reforms, Luperón represents what we call a *speech community model of bilingual education*. We argue that the school's view of education and second language acquisition as *a social process building on the speech community itself, and not just as the individual psycholinguistic process of students*, is the key to its success. We specify the characteristics of the *speech community model of bilingual education*, even as we

discuss some of its limitations. This school's impressive success educating its newly arrived Spanish-speaking population holds important lessons for the schooling of immigrant youth in a globalised world. Furthermore, this study contributes to the often-overlooked but critical study of bilingual programmes for immigrant students at the secondary level.²

In what follows, we present the argument in three parts. In the second section, we briefly discuss the shifting politics of bilingual education in the USA and we present contemporary models for educating bilingual, immigrant youth in New York City. We then introduce an alternative model, what we call the *speech community model of bilingual education*, which we see being enacted at Gregorio Luperón High School. In the third section, we introduce Gregorio Luperón High, its students and the surrounding community. We present information about Luperón's comparative success in educating Latino youth. We then discuss the data collection and analysis methods used in this study. In the fourth section, we present the characteristics of the speech community model of bilingual education enacted at Luperón. While illustrating the factors that contribute to its success, we also discuss some of the limitations of this model. In conclusion, we discuss the potential contribution of the speech community model of bilingual education to the challenges of schooling immigrant youth.

Educating Immigrant Youth in the USA

The shifting politics of bilingual education in the USA

Bilingual education has never enjoyed widespread support in the USA. But in the late 1960s, the rising number of students coming especially from Mexico and Puerto Rico, as well as the political context of the Civil Rights Movement, spurred government funding for educational programmes that used the students' native language to facilitate academic learning and English language acquisition. In this same period, Cubans arriving in Miami-Dade County established the Coral Way School, a predecessor of today's two-way dual language programmes, in which Cuban and Anglo children were taught in English and Spanish.

In 1968, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as the Bilingual Education Act, provided funding and support for the institution of bilingual education programmes as well as for teacher education programmes to prepare bilingual teachers.³ Though *maintenance bilingual education* prevailed briefly, by 1974 the Bilingual Education Act had narrowed the goal of bilingual education as the teaching of English to those who were 'limited English speakers' and explicitly promoted what was defined as *transitional bilingual education*. In this model, students receive intensive English as a Second Language instruction. They are provided with some content instruction in their first language for three years, so that they sustain their knowledge development in content areas as they learn English; they are then expected to exit transitional bilingual education programmes.

By the 1990s, transitional bilingual education was clearly under attack. Many Americans resented the use of educational resources to teach in a

language other than English; treating linguistic competence in English as a symbol of national allegiance, they argued that immigrants should drop their first languages and assimilate to the USA through English monolingualism. Critics blamed the low levels of academic achievement and tragically high dropout rates of Latino students upon bilingual education (for a review of the condition of Latino education, see Darder *et al.*, 1997; Espinoza-Herold, 2002; Garcia, 2001, 2005; and Pedraza & Rivera, 2005). Others decried the fact that, in many places, bilingual education led to within-school segregation of English language learners (for more on the history of bilingual education, see Crawford, 2000, 2004; Garcia, 2005).

Today, political pressures tend to have significantly restricted opportunities for bilingual education. California, Massachusetts and Arizona have declared bilingual education illegal. Changes in federal education laws make for an unfriendly climate as well. In 2002, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the Bilingual Education Act) was eliminated as part of the authorisation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Its successor, Title III of NCLB, is called 'Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students'. Garcia (2005: 98) describes these changes:

Whereas the 1994 version of the Bilingual Education Act included among its goals 'developing the English skills . . . and to the extent possible, the native-language skills' of LEP students, the new law stresses skills in English only. The word *bilingual* has been completely eliminated from the law.

The testing requirements of NCLB have also pressured schools to mainstream students with limited English proficiency as soon as possible and to focus on the content of standardised exams rather than on students' academic and linguistic development.

Federal pressure to demonstrate content-area knowledge (usually in English) has increased, and traditional comprehensive high school bilingual programmes have resolved to dedicate less time to instruction in languages other than English (see, for example, Escamilla, 2006; Hornberger, 2006; Menken, 2005). Increasingly, English Learners are integrated with English-speaking peers for content instruction, remaining linguistically segregated only for the required English as a Second Language instruction.

At present, only one model of bilingual education seems to have gained limited public support in some parts of the USA – *two way dual language programmes*.⁴ The contemporary two-way dual language model integrates students with different linguistic profiles, incorporating children who are learning English, those who are bilingual, and those who are learning a language other than English (Cloud *et al.*, 2000; García, 2004; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Torres-Guzmán, 2002; Valdés, 1997). Students attend classes together, while instruction is split between the two languages. Dual language programmes predominate at the elementary level.

The integrated nature of the two-way dual language model makes it difficult to implement from scratch during the four years of an American high school. Because instruction is more specialised at the high school level, it is difficult to teach the same academic content to students with two distinct

levels of language proficiency. Furthermore, the more specialised, academic register of a second language required for secondary subject instruction is remarkably difficult to achieve within the short four-year period of a high school education.⁵ This has proven especially taxing for English-speaking students, whose proficiency in a second language tends to develop more slowly than those who are learning English, the majority language. In essence, to be successful in a dual language high school, students would need to enter with a reasonable level of bilingual fluency. For these reasons, dual language high schools are rare and difficult to implement; they do not seem to provide a feasible model for educating newcomer immigrant youth.

Educating linguistically diverse immigrant youth in New York

In New York State, bilingual education has not suffered the same political opposition as it has faced in other locations. But, as in other locations, standardised testing has affected bilingual education. The state's implementation of the rigorous English Regents exam, now required for graduation, has caused high schools to reduce the time devoted to using a language other than English in academic instruction (Menken, 2005). While its predecessor, the Regents Competency Tests (RCT), tested only basic skills of English language and literacy, the revised, two-day, six-hour Regents exam assesses the four English Language Arts Standards, which require that students read, write, listen and speak for: (1) information and understanding, (2) literary response and expression, (3) critical analysis and evaluation, and (4) social interaction. The revised English Regents examination is complex, even for native speakers of English.

Faced with the challenge of the English Regents, most New York City high schools with large immigrant populations have gradually increased the intensity of English language instruction. The effect has been to slowly abandon bilingual education at the high school level, perhaps the place where immigrant students most need their native language to learn difficult academic content (García & Menken, forthcoming; Menken, 2005). The available research suggests that, in failing to develop the academic register of the first language, much is lost (August & Hakuta, 1997; Baker, 1996; Bialystok, 2001; Cummins, 1979, 1981, 1991, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Valdés, 2001).

The recent creation of small high schools in New York City⁶ and other urban centres poses another challenge to the bilingual education of immigrant adolescents. Small high school activists argue that smaller schools more effectively provide the academic, social and emotional support that adolescents need. However, it is often difficult for small high schools to have well staffed bilingual academic programmes.⁷ Most small high schools do not even accept English Language Learners.

New York City has witnessed the creation of a particular type of small school for immigrant newcomers called the *international high school*. While international high schools respond to many of the specific needs of newcomer youth, they do not support the development of the students' first languages. Small international high schools purposely place newly arrived, linguistically

heterogeneous students in the same classrooms, which provide academic instruction in English only. Some of these international high schools often employ dedicated teachers who are not only knowledgeable about second language acquisition and learning but also aware of, and responsive to, the issues that immigrant students face (see Sylvan & Romero, 2002). At least six public international schools for newly arrived immigrant students who are just learning English and one large Newcomer High School have been created in the last decade in New York City; the well established and reputable La Guardia International High School provides an example of this model.

While these kinds of international high schools are a sound idea for populations of minority language students that are too small or too residentially dispersed to make a separate high school feasible, such ethnolinguistically integrated multilingual schools may not be as appropriate to educate recently arrived Latino students. Latino students are not only numerous,⁸ they are by far the largest group in New York City schools, making up 37.8% of the public school population. Furthermore, Latinos often live in segregated neighbourhoods. The case study we present offers a viable alternative – a segregated small school that nurtures a specific ethnolinguistic community.

A speech community model of bilingual education

Our case study of a bilingual high school in New York City represents what we call a *speech community model of bilingual education*. Unlike transitional bilingual education, two-way dual language education, or international high schools for newcomers, in which the emphasis is on the acquisition of the second language of individual students, Gregorio Luperón High School promotes what Brutt-Griffler (2004) has called *macroacquisition*, or second language acquisition as a *social process involving an entire speech community*.⁹

Second language acquisition theoretical frameworks have always focused on *individual* L2 learners, with the native speaker considered the language target, and all deviations considered errors, interlanguage or fossilisation (Selinker, 1972; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Most ESL and transitional bilingual education models conceive of English language acquisition as individual phenomena, and they attempt to move individual children closer to the target language native-speaker model. Because this conceptualisation is so prevalent in US society, schools tend to favour integrated language education programmes, such as those embodied in dual-language education programmes. The thinking is that native speakers provide an important model of second language acquisition and that a second language is acquired by negotiating communication with them (Wong Fillmore, 1992).

In the last few years, anthropological and sociological studies of second language acquisition have revealed the utterly *social* nature of second language acquisition. Scholars have emphasised how second language learners 'are situated in specific social, historical and cultural contexts and how learners resist or accept the positions those contexts offer them' (Norton & Toohey, 2001: 310). Canagarajah (1999), Mazrui (2004), Pennycook (1994), Phillipson (1992) and others have made us well aware that the teaching and learning of English has to take into account the sociolinguistic and sociohistorical context

of the language community involved, and to resist, in Canagarajah's (1999) words, the 'linguistic imperialism in English teaching'.

Traditional individual models of second language acquisition have ignored three factors that have been recently shown to be most important in learning a second language:

- (1) the role that *communities of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991)¹⁰ play in providing positions for participants' second language practices;
- (2) the complex ways in which learning and speaking a second language engages speakers' *social identities* (Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995); and
- (3) the way *power relations* influence linguistic interaction (Bourdieu, 1991).

The schooling at Gregorio Luperón High School incorporates this *social* focus, taking into account the communities of practice in which these adolescents live and communicate, their social identities as Spanish-speaking immigrant newcomers who are learning English, and the power relations between the poorer Dominican community in which they reside and the larger English-speaking New York City. As we demonstrate below, the teachers at Luperón have developed a pedagogy of second language acquisition concerned, not with individuals, but rather with the speech community and the ways in which practices, identity and power interact to provide a context for learning, especially the learning of English. This speech community model has a focus on *macroacquisition*, which Brutt-Griffler (2004) defines as the 'acquisition of a second language by a speech community. It is a process of *social second language acquisition*, the embodiment of the process of language spread and change, or language change through its spread' (Brutt-Griffler, 2004: 138, our italics). This school supports a model of Latino acquisition of English, spreading English among Latino adolescents, as both English and the adolescents' Spanish are changed in interaction. Through this process, English is adopted as the Latino students' own, no longer solely belonging to the Anglo monolingual community, while their US Spanish emerges. Macroacquisition is a process rooted in and supported by the group's own bilingualism.

To engage with the students' social identities and equalise power relations, the speech community model of Gregorio Luperón supports the idea that one learns English best in the company of others from the same speech community who are struggling to acquire it, without competition from native speakers. Joshua A. Fishman's (2004: 429) sociolinguistic model posits this principle. Fishman says:

[A]ny nominal Xish presence in upper status and power functions will more often than not be completely overshadowed (if not totally eclipsed) by the vastly more frequent and often far superior Yish presence in those very same functions.

Gregorio Luperón's macroacquisition model of English language acquisition ensures that immigrant Spanish-speaking students are not overshadowed by English native speakers.

To provide positions for the students' language practices that build on their communities of practice, Gregorio Luperón focuses on strategic language targets, insisting that competence need not be achieved in all language skills for all purposes immediately. Fishman's (1972: 38–39) sociolinguistic model has also posited that teachers 'ought to specify the contexts in which the student plans to use the target language' because '[n]o one knows how to speak a language appropriately in all contexts in which it is used, because no one has access to all the societal roles in which the language is used and which constrain language usage' (p. 39). The success of Gregorio Luperón's model is precisely that it tailors English language acquisition to this particular speech community, focusing first on the students' immediate English language development to succeed academically in the English language test – the English Regents – that would otherwise be a barrier to their high school graduation.

In what follows, we first discuss the setting of this study and the methods of data collection and analysis. We then specify the characteristics of the speech community model, as enacted at Gregorio Luperón High School, which we feel contribute to its unusual success in educating Dominican newcomer youth.

Setting and Methods

Setting: Gregorio Luperón as community, school and students

Gregorio Luperón High School is a community high school in all senses of the word. The school began when, in 1991, a group of Dominican activists (many of them working through a Dominican community-based organisation) joined together to develop a solution to the high failure rates of newcomer Dominican youth in New York City high schools. Gregorio Luperón began as an orientation programme, in which students stayed one to three semesters before being 'mainstreamed' to area high schools.

Gregorio Luperón was intentionally located in Washington Heights, the neighbourhood with the highest concentration of Dominicans in the USA.¹¹ One of three Dominicans in New York resides in Washington Heights, where, in 2000, 74% of the residents were Latinos. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Washington Heights fell prey to the city's crack cocaine epidemic and had the city's highest crime rates. But since the late 1990s, there has been an influx of professionals attracted by lower rents. Still today, Washington Height's crime rate is just slightly lower than that of Harlem.

Dominicans form a considerable ethnic group in New York; indeed, they are the second largest Latino group in the city, numbering 554,638 in 2000. But with a poverty rate of 32%, Dominicans are the poorest of all ethnic and racial groups in New York City (Hernández & Rivera-Batiz, 2003). In 1999, the mean annual per capita household income of Dominicans was \$11,065, about half the income of the average household in the USA and lower than that of the Black/African American population and of other Latinos.

In 1999, Gregorio Luperón became a full-fledged high school. Most of the teachers are Dominicans, and most of these are immigrants themselves. The principal of the school, only the second one in its history, is also a Dominican

immigrant who arrived in New York City at the age of 15. The school currently enrolls approximately 350 students, a figure that varies over the course of the year as new students arrive. Eighty-two percent of the students have been in the USA no more than three years. Approximately 85% of the students are from the Dominican Republic, which results in a school that is remarkably homogenous in terms of not only language but also cultural background.

At Gregorio Luperón, all students take three periods of English as a Second Language or English Language Arts a day. All but one of the ESL teachers are themselves bi- or multilingual, and about half of them speak Spanish. Though ESL teachers rarely use Spanish in the classroom, they can rely upon it as a resource when necessary; they also have a well developed and experiential sense of the importance and difficulty of learning a second language. Students also take one period of Spanish Language Arts with Latino bilingual teachers. For most students, all content instruction is with Latino content teachers in Spanish, although, as we will see, bilingualism is an important resource. In the entire curriculum, only five content-area courses are entirely taught in English: for two of the subjects, Math B and Advanced Placement Biology, the language of instruction has been determined by the fact that the exams are offered in English only; the three other classes – Web design, Economics, Business Math – are advanced electives offered as opportunities to students who have been in the school longer and who are more proficient in English.

Despite the fact that Gregorio Luperón has the greatest percentage of English Language Learners of all high schools of NYC (97%), the school has experienced remarkable success in educating newcomer immigrant students who are also learning English. It has one of the highest attendance rates in the city – 91% (www.insideschools.org/fs/school_profile.php?id=1184). And despite the hardships of the English Regents, the difficult English language examination needed to graduate from NYC high schools, 75% of the students who took the English Regents exam in June 2004 passed it (English teacher's personal communication). As with most schools with a newcomer population, this pass rate in the English Regents is achieved not after four years, but sometimes after five or six years of attendance.¹² The percentage that passed the Advanced Math Regents in 2003–2004 (Sequential Math, Course 3) is higher – 73% – than the 50% state average. Although, in recent years, one-third of Dominican high school students have dropped out or been pushed out of high schools in New York City, in 2003–2004 Luperón boasted an 80% graduation rate.¹³ Of the nine students who didn't graduate on time, four finished over the summer, and two earned GEDs (Kovac, 2004).

Methods

The research presented in this paper draws from a qualitative case study of a unique effort to meet the educational needs of Latino immigrant newcomer youth.¹⁴ It addresses the following research questions: how does the educational model of this high school differ from, and how is it similar to, other models presently offered for Latino adolescents in the USA? What are the characteristics of this model that support recently arrived Latino

adolescents' education, as well as their English language learning? What are the limitations of the model?

This paper uses data gathered by the authors in an on-going study directed by Lesley Bartlett which started in September 2003. Specifically, this paper draws from weekly participant observation over the course of the first nine months of the study in lower level ESL and Spanish classes and content area classes; seven focus groups conducted in Spanish with newly arrived students enrolled in ESL 1 and 2 in March and April, 2004; interviews with five teachers and two administrators; a focus group conducted with some ESL teachers and another with the Spanish teachers; and, finally, monthly staff development sessions coordinated by the authors over the course of the first year.

The data for this paper were analysed using an analytic inductive approach (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). We wrote fieldnotes immediately after each observation or interview. As data collection proceeded, we began to incorporate initial hypotheses and interpretations in fieldnotes as hunches subject to discredit or confirmation. We met approximately every three weeks to review our data collection and discuss developing analyses. At regular intervals of data collection, the researchers reviewed fieldnotes and wrote analytical memos (Emerson *et al.*, 1995; see also Richardson, 2003). These memos indicated which analyses needed further evidence, which was then collected. At this time, we consciously sought negative instances as well. Finally, both researchers re-read the full corpus of data used for this paper, identifying the list of salient characteristics presented below, which led us to the identification of the *speech community model* of bilingual education.

Characteristics of the Speech Community Model of Bilingual Education at Luperón

Gregorio Luperón's *speech community model* rests on seven factors that build on the students' communities of practice, engage the students' social identities and equalise the power relations between English and Spanish, and their speakers. We argue that these factors are partly responsible for the success of their students in graduating from high school:

- (1) absence of students who are native speakers of English;
- (2) presence of native Spanish-speaking Latino teachers as models;
- (3) the high status of Spanish;
- (4) specific English language acquisition targets;
- (5) bilingualism as a pedagogical strategy;
- (6) Spanish to educate rigorously; and
- (7) Spanish to connect deeply.

In paying attention exclusively to the education and the English language learning of only Spanish-speaking newcomers, Gregorio Luperón's model is reminiscent of the very early period of bilingual education when maintenance bilingual education programmes prevailed. What is significant about this school, however, is that it was developed in an era of accountability and higher standards, at a time when bilingual education has lost national favour.

Precisely because it has done so at this historical juncture, the model is a hybrid of maintenance bilingual education, transitional bilingual education, as well as elite bilingual education.¹⁵ From the maintenance bilingual education programmes, it takes its focus on only Spanish-speaking children, its use of Spanish to seriously educate, and its attention to its development. From the elite bilingual education programmes it takes bilingualism as the norm, developing each language gradually and according to the functions for which it is going to be used. Aspects of language hybridity evident in transitional bilingual education are also clearly present here, with both languages frequently used in some combination. Its attention to the students' English language acquisition is also reminiscent of transitional bilingual education models. We turn now to describing the specific characteristics of this speech community model of bilingual education at Gregorio Luperón.

Absence of students who are native English speakers

All of the students at Gregorio Luperón are non-native speakers of English who arrived within the past four years from Latin America. In the absence of native English speakers, students seem more willing to experiment with their limited English. Juniors and seniors in the school can be heard using English among themselves outside of the English class. But even newcomers risk incorporating English from early on. For example, one day, when sitting in the back of a social studies lesson, one of us heard a Mexican student who had arrived four weeks earlier say to his classmate: 'Can you pass me *mi mochila, por favor*. Thank you. *Muchas gracias*.' (10/15/03). In our observations, we noted that students used English playfully with each other; it was as if, knowing that they could use Spanish to communicate with one another, and knowing that they were all in a similar position, the pressure to communicate was alleviated, freeing them to experiment with English. In many comprehensive high schools, where students are linguistically integrated for instruction, Latino adolescents sit silently, reluctant to speak for fear that they would be laughed at by their classmates.

The ESL teachers themselves note how much English the students use even among themselves. Commenting on how far the school has come since it was just a programme for newcomers, one Basic ESL teacher told us:

I came the fourth year of the school. I've seen it metamorphose. It was a cocoon. Most of the kids just spoke Spanish. English [class] was the only time they heard English. It was a contrived situation. It's not like that anymore. The announcements, the teachers themselves have changed. . . . The kids want it. I now see kids speak it amongst themselves. I think they see the need. Prior to becoming a four year school, students knew they had two years here before going to 'Planet America'. Now, they see it, that we've got to speak English. . . . I am very impressed. It's a natural process to fall into your own language, to codeswitch. But I'm amazed. The older ones are often speaking in English. (Focus Group, 2/3/05)

The absence of native English language speakers in the school's surround makes it possible for students not only to try out their limited spoken English, but also their limited written English. Apparent in the example that follows is the inability of these students to use idioms and metaphoric expressions in English, although they're perfectly capable of doing so in Spanish. What is important, however, is that the students, all English Language Learners, are not reticent to communicate public messages in written English. On 10/29/03 a sign written by students in the 4th floor read:

Barriga llena, corazón contento. Ven a la gran venta de bizcocho este 31 de octubre. Student government.

'A full stomach, a happy heart. Come to the great cake sale this October 31. Student Government.' (our translation)

But on the second floor, the English sign simply read:

Big cake sale and something else. October 31. Student Government

In a school with English language native speakers, newcomer students would have never been given the opportunity to write public signs, but here, students are encouraged to do so, and despite their language limitations, manage to communicate in writing with their classmates.

Gregorio Luperón has been able to establish within the school a *linguistically safe space* for Latino students to try out their English slowly, in a context of support, where everyone understands that English will come and where Spanish is seen as an asset in the context of English language acquisition.

In general, the newcomer students at Gregorio Luperón, all Latinos and all English Language Learners, establish a culture of achievement where English is naturally learned as they become educated in and through Spanish. An ESL teacher referred to the rigor of the school by saying: 'It is high achieving. The students are very competitive. They have this first generation immigrant mentality that they must succeed. They have a lot of responsibilities. But the success is due to the students.' (Focus group, 2/3/05). In speaking about the students, another ESL teacher says: 'My metaphor for them is warriors, but in a positive sense. They dare to step on uncharted territory. There are a lot of landmines.' (Focus Group, 2/3/05). The homogeneous educational environment of Gregorio Luperón provides for the students, and also the teachers, possibilities of risk without humiliation, protecting the students' linguistic and cultural identities.

Native Spanish-speaking Latino teachers as models

At Gregorio Luperón, many of the teachers and administrators are themselves immigrants who have struggled to learn English. They often live in the surrounding neighbourhoods, and many are immersed in Dominican politics. As the Assistant Principal told us: 'Many of us used to live or still live in this community. It's not like we're from another place.' (Interview, 3/29/04). This linguistic and cultural similarity matters in several significant ways.

The teachers understand and identify with their students' struggles, and they consciously refer to their own experiences to make that connection. The

Spanish-speaking teachers in this school do much to build the students' confidence in their English. Although teachers use Spanish in instruction, they communicate a commitment to their students' use of English that is infrequent in schools with English-only instruction. For example, in a math class taught by a Dominican teacher, one of us heard the teacher explain to students how he expected them to translate the English problems from the textbook:

No quiero show con el inglés. El problema no es inglés. Si yo, que llegué a los 30 años y viviendo en Washington Heights, me defiendo, y lo devuelvo p'atrás, Uds. están moralmente obligados a hablar. (E: 10/15/03)

I don't want 'show' with English. The problem is not English. If I, who arrived at the age of 30 and have lived in Washington Heights, can 'defend' myself, and I even 'throw it [the English language] back', you are morally obliged to speak.

The teacher employed colloquial Caribbean Spanish and referred to his own bilingual situation to set himself as an example of one who learned to 'defend' or take care of himself in English. And in doing so, he exhorts his students to face English directly and not put on an act.

The teachers hold and communicate high expectations for students. For example, during our observations at the end of one grading period, we saw one teacher asking students to show him their report cards. To students who earned less than an 'A', he made comments such as, 'Where's the rest of this grade?' or 'It will be an 'A' next time, right?' Students themselves see the advantage of having teachers who speak Spanish, even in their learning of English. A student in the lunchroom told one of us: 'Aquí enseñan inglés de poquito' [Here they teach you English a bit at a time] (Interview, 11/29/03). Another student referred to the difficulties he had with an English teacher in another school 'que sabía purito ingles' [who knew only English]; he continued, 'Aquí es mejor' [Here it is better] (3/22/04). When asked if he was making progress in English, a recently arrived student explained:

Buenísimo. Estamos progresando. Es mejor, los maestros la mayoría lo hablan. Ellos lo explican en español, y así se va aprendiendo más.

Great. We're making progress. It is better, most teachers speak it. They explain it in Spanish, and so you learn more. 3/22/04

The linguistic and cultural continuity between students and teachers creates the high expectations and the rigorous academic climate that surrounds this school. But the fact that the people in authority are also bilingual Latinos equalises the power between the dominant and non-dominant group, lowering the students' resistance to acquiring English.

The high status of Spanish

Unlike most bilingual programmes, where students' native language rarely achieves the same prestige as English, in this school the status of Spanish and English are more equalised. Many of the authority figures in the school (including the principal, most of the teaching staff and the office staff) are native speakers of Spanish. Bilingualism seems to be a goal held by all for all.

For example, in interviews and private conversations, the few native English-speaking faculty who do not speak Spanish lamented that fact; and during announcements, the Anglo assistant principal made announcements in both English and Spanish, though her Spanish was not fluent. Respect for Spanish was widely shared by faculty and students.

This equalisation of status between the languages has led to very positive attitudes toward *both* English and Spanish. For example, a student told us:

El español es como la lengua con que tú te comunicas con tu cultura. El inglés es como la superación. Si no sabes inglés, uno no va a llegar a ningún lado. Es lo más importante después del español. (Focus Groups, per. 2, 3/22/04).

Spanish is the language in which you communicate with your culture. English is like improving oneself. If you don't know English, you're not going to get anywhere. It is the most important thing after Spanish.

As English monolingualism has not become marked as the norm, there is no threat to students' Spanish language identity. As a result, both English and Spanish are valued by students. For example, in one of the focus groups, a female student commented:

El español es mi lengua nativa. El inglés me encanta. En todos los países hablan ese idioma, es muy importante, para todo, más aquí, es el idioma oficial de aquí y tiene que serlo.

Spanish is my native language. I love English. That language is spoken in all countries, it is very important, for everything, more than anything here. It is the official language here and it has to be. (Focus group 2, 3/22/04).

The high status of Spanish, alongside the importance given to English, is an important feature of this unusual high school, contributing positively to the students' development of a bilingual identity.

Specific English language acquisition targets

Furthermore, the high status of Spanish contributes to a situation in which Spanish and English do not compete in this school, but exist in functional complementarity. Students perceive functional differences in the languages. As shown above, in focus group meetings, students discussed Spanish as the language of emotion, of passion, of family and of connection to their homes. Yet they discussed English as necessary for adjusting to life in the USA and 'getting ahead' in the US educational system. In a separate focus group, another female student said about English:

El inglés para hacer más amistades, para pasar la high school. Porque sin inglés, uno tiene que saber inglés, es el idioma oficial de este país.

English to make friends, to pass high school. Because without English, one has to know English, it is the official language of this country. (Focus Group, per. 7, 3/22/04)

Yet another female student said:

El español es la forma de expresarse los latinos. Es importante el inglés si estás en los EEUU; estás en un país que hablan inglés, y puedes identificarte,

acomodarte obligatoriamente a ellos. En las universidades tienes que saber inglés. Pero para llegar a la Universidad tienes que pasar el Regente de inglés. Spanish is the way that Latinos express themselves. English is important if you're in the United States. You're in a country where English is spoken, and you can identify, accommodate as a requirement to them. In universities you have to know English. But to get to university you have to pass the English Regents. (Focus group per 2, 3/22/04)

It is clear that students value English as a way to communicate with others, especially outside of the community, and as the language of the USA. This sentiment was expressed by many of the adolescents we interviewed. But students value English especially as the language of the test that holds the key to their graduation from high school – the English Regents.

Teachers understand the functional linguistic divisions and the necessity of specific English targets, and they have organised the ESL curriculum in particular to build competence to pass the English Regents. In ESL classes, the basic levels focus on the structuring of sentences and simple paragraphs and the acquisition of vocabulary. But the more intermediate and advanced levels build up literacy skills in English by focusing on what one of the ESL teachers called 'fox strategies': teaching strategies to develop literacy skills that will be useful to pass the English Language Regents. 'We have to be like the fox – this is the back door, this is the way you can get in', he said in one of the staff development sessions we did during the first year. And in fact, over the course of a few months during our staff development, the teaching staff identified the 'fox strategies' they use with students. Fox strategies include, for example, providing models, giving students prepared essays and skeleton paragraphs, and making them memorise concluding sentences and transitions.

The targeted way in which English is taught at Gregorio Luperón follows a model of bilingualism that believes these students need English immediately for certain functions – passing the English Regents the most important one in their immediate lives – but not for others, for which Spanish still serves them well. It is the teachers' ability to target English language instruction to the specific needs of these Latino high school adolescents that make the students successful where other schools, trying to do too much, too fast, fail.

Bilingualism as a pedagogical strategy

Because Gregorio Luperón focuses on a single Spanish-speaking speech community, bilingualism and reference to both languages is made possible as a pedagogical strategy.

In the last decade, as the bilingual education market has shrunk in response to the increase in standardised testing and the pressure of English-only policies in some states, many publishers have stopped printing textbooks in Spanish. Thus, teachers at Gregorio Luperón generally have to rely on content area texts in English. For example, a science teacher who teaches in Spanish explained that there are no up-to-date textbooks for Environmental Science or Biology in Spanish. Although it is unfortunate that students have to read academic content in English, the teachers have made a

virtue of necessity by employing translation, an often-ignored tool for the development of academic English.

Extending the ways in which Latin American countries use English language texts in secondary and higher education while teaching in Spanish only, this school builds on *translation* from the English of the textbooks to the Spanish of the classroom as a way to make sense of the academic material presented in the text. It turns out that the need to use English texts and to translate them into Spanish creates a dialogic context which spurs rich conversation and dialogue. This translation practice sometimes engages teacher and students in important metalinguistic talk and cross-cultural reflections, important for adolescent newcomers to make sense of their languages and cultures. For example, in a social studies class, the teacher and students got into a heated discussion of how to translate the word 'District Court', which students had been translating as *Cortes Districtoriales*. The teacher said:

No sé cuál es el equivalente. No creo que lo haya en México y Santo Domingo. Cortes Districtoriales no está bien dicho. Circuit Courts, Cortes de Circuitos y Apelaciones. (Obs 2, 10/15/03)

I don't know what the equivalent is. I don't think there is one in Mexico and Santo Domingo. *Cortes Districtoriales* is not the right way of saying it. Circuit Courts, *Cortes de Circuitos y Apelaciones*.

Beyond providing a context to deepen dialogue and thus conceptual information, translation can be a pedagogical technique to spur English language acquisition. Translation has fallen into disfavour in the field of English language teaching as communicative approaches have gained favour. But it turns out that in this school, translation is an important pedagogical strategy for second language instruction. This is in keeping with the ways in which literate adolescents and adults develop academic proficiency in a second language, often building up literacy skills before they are comfortable with communicative skills. As a matter of fact, many students echoed what this student said of English: '*Lo sé escribir más que hablarlo y entenderlo.*' 'I know how to write it, more than speaking and understanding it.' (Focus group, per. 7, 3/22/04).

A word of caution is needed, however. Although translation works well for the many literate adolescents that the school receives, the lack of books in the native language is a marked disadvantage for the students with interrupted formal education that are increasingly entering the school.¹⁶

Spanish is also used to make sense of English. Even in basic ESL instruction, Spanish is a welcome tool for those teachers who are bilingual. The teacher at the basic ESL level explains what she does:

I use cognates to make the students aware of how many words they already know in English, and to draw parallels to show that English and Spanish grammar are similar, to make connections . . . I use Spanish as a tool to get them back on task when they're distracted. I use it for humour, for making parallels. I try not to use too much Spanish in level one, because we want to immerse them as much as possible in English. But when I'm working with a literacy group, or with SIFE kids [Students with Interrupted Formal Education], I use Spanish as a tool to assess

their cognitive understanding, to check in on them, and to develop study skills. (Focus group with ESL teachers, 2/3/05).

The advanced ESL teacher, who does not speak Spanish, works hard at developing a natural English environment in his classroom so that the students' social interaction is in English as well. He observes, however, that this is a 'Sisyphean' task. He continues:

The students in group work often resort to Spanish when interacting. There's lots of goading and playing little games . . . But there's a game we play. They know I don't know Spanish, but . . . I let them know I do know what they're saying. Does he or doesn't he know Spanish? So I test them. (Focus group, 2/3/05)

Speaking of his ESL training, which required that only English be used, the same teacher observes: 'I threw that away. . . My understandings about language learning and cultural aspects have been deepened here' (Focus group, 2/3/05).

All the ESL teachers attempt to create a context for English language use, what one of them calls 'a natural English environment in the classroom so that their social interaction is in English as well'. Those who are English monolinguals have come to accept the use of Spanish among the students themselves to make sense of academic English, a way, in the words of one of them, of 'opening a window in a windowless room'.

As a converted warehouse, Gregorio Luperón has few windows. In the windowless rooms where the teaching is in Spanish, English opens windows for the students, creating possibilities in this island of Spanish of seeing new views and worlds. In the windowless rooms where the teaching is in English, Spanish opens windows through which they can see the world of English. Bilingualism in this school, made possible by the isolation of this speech community, is a welcomed resource to open windows. And the school builds on the students' bilingual practices to educate them and facilitate their English language acquisition.

Spanish to educate rigorously

One of the advantages of having well prepared Spanish-speaking teachers in Gregorio Luperón is that Spanish can be used to uphold academic rigor. The content area teachers who have immigrated as adults have advanced professional preparation. Because their credentials went unrecognised in the USA, they have channelled their expertise into teaching.

The Regents exams in Math, Biology, Global History and US History are available in Spanish translation, and so these classes can be taught in Spanish. But whereas most high schools in New York City struggle to find competent bilingual maths and science teachers, Gregorio Luperón has attracted highly qualified teachers of these subjects. In fact, the three science teachers are all medical doctors, whereas the maths teachers include several engineers and professional accountants.

Whereas many bilingual education programmes at the high school level use the Preview-View-Review bilingual approach, which seems wasteful at

times, Gregorio Luperón simply teaches most content in Spanish.¹⁷ And although, as we have seen, bilingual communicative practices naturally creep in, and translations are widely used, Spanish is used as the sole instrument to raise educational standards. Educational models that focus mainly on students' English language acquisition often fail to insist on academic rigor and certainly cannot provide students with the same academically challenging curriculum. From what we have observed, the content curriculum at Gregorio Luperón is of the highest quality, with students and teachers involved in solving sophisticated mathematical, scientific and sociohistorical problems.

The Spanish language teachers at Gregorio Luperón have insisted on the importance of Spanish academic literacy and Latin American cultural knowledge. Spanish is taught as a native language and the teachers are extremely knowledgeable about Spanish authors, readings, writings and linguistics. Although many of the bilingual education programmes around New York City have started to align their Spanish language programmes with the English language skills needed for the English Regents (Menken, 2005), these teachers are resisting such alignment. During one session in which the Spanish language teachers met with the principal and with us to discuss their curriculum planning, the following principle was established:

Que la enseñanza del español en Gregorio Luperón debe responder a los cánones de la enseñanza del español como lengua materna. Esto quiere decir compartir nuestra literatura latinoamericana y española, nuestros autores, nuestros modos de escribir, pensar, y hablar.

That the teaching of Spanish at Gregorio Luperón should respond to the canons of the teaching of Spanish as a native language. This means to share our Latin American and Spanish literature, our authors, our ways of writing, thinking, and speaking.

The principal concurred, adding

No podemos jamás renunciar a la lengua, literatura y cultura nuestra.

We can never renounce our language, our literature, our culture.
(Meeting, 1/31/05)

The education in this school builds on community practices, as well as their values, beliefs and traditions.

The teaching in these Spanish language classes, both in subject instruction, as well as Spanish Language Arts, seems pedagogically anachronistic at times. But, of course, gone are the 'scaffolds' that surround most of the teaching of English Language Learners in comprehensive high schools. When instruction is in Spanish only, scaffolds are seldom needed, and the teachers teach in ways that combine traditional teacher-centred classrooms with collaborative learning, expecting of students only the highest-calibre academic work. Warriors is a good metaphor not only for the students, but for the teachers in this school, who demand rigorous academic work and who work through the landmines of resistance to bilingualism in the USA.

Spanish to connect deeply

We've alluded previously to the teachers' linguistic and cultural connections to students and to the different position that the Spanish Language Arts teachers have vis-à-vis the ESL teachers. Although linguistic and cultural continuity does not ensure good teaching and does not always result in student learning, it is clear that in this school, a true community of learning, Spanish is the thread that connects all the educational experiences, as well as the relationships between teachers and students. If we believe, with Cummins (2000: 40), that '[H]uman relationships are at the heart of schooling', Spanish is what makes these relationships possible.

This special role of Spanish in establishing relationships and connections is most evident in the Spanish Language Arts classes. The Spanish Language Arts teachers don't limit themselves to the Latin American and Caribbean canon. They also strive to include students' experiences and interests in the classroom. One strategy we frequently witnessed to achieve this was the use of *autobiographical narratives* in both Spanish and English classes. The topics varied but often asked students to reflect on their transnational lives. Most of the autobiographical essays that were written in the Spanish Language Arts class centred on two subjects – the students' separation from mothers and fathers during the immigration process and their legal papers and documents in the USA.

During one particularly poignant Spanish Language Arts class observed on 10/15/03, students wrote and orally presented essays about separation from their families. It turns out that most of these students have grown up without their mother and/or father, as their parents left to seek a better life in the USA. It is as adolescents that many of these students, newly arrived, are getting to know their parents for the first time. Below we quote from the essays of three students:

Vivía con mi abuela, desde un mes hasta los 15 años que vine p'acá. Estoy conociendo a mi mamá ahora. No es fácil. Para mí, ella no es mi mamá. Mi abuela es mi mamá. Quiero más a mi abuela, por supuesto. Pero a mi mamá, yo la quiero. Pero no lo siento.

I lived with my grandmother, from when I was a month until 15 years of age that I came here. I'm getting to know my mother now. It is not easy. For me, she's not my mother. My grandmother is my mother. I love my grandmother more, of course. But I love my mother. But I don't feel it.

Yo duré seis años sola. Fueron los peores días de mi vida. Cuando papá se fue al año, mi abuela representaba mi papá y mi mamá. Cuando vine yo creía que me iba a morir. Ahora nos hemos distanciado. Ella es la única, tiene que trabajar. No tenemos esa comunicación. A mí, mami ya no me hacía falta.

I spent six years alone. They were the worst days of my life. When dad left a year later, my grandmother represented my father and mother. When I came I thought I was going to die. Now we are far apart. She is the only one, she has to work. We don't have too much communication. I no longer needed mami.

Mi mamá estaba aquí, pero cuando hubo una emergencia, una redada, que cogían a mi hermano preso, se fue. Aprendí a cocinar. Tenía tres maridos en casa – mi padre y dos hermanos. Mi mamá nos dejó a los 9 años, y después hasta los 17 años. Es duro, duro, estar sin mamá. Cuando me enfermé con la regla, tenía vergüenza, no podía decírselo a mi mamá.

My mother was here, but when there was an emergency, a police sting, that my brother was taken to prison, she left. I learned to cook. I had three husbands at home – my father and my two brothers. My mother left us when I was 9 years old, and then until I was 17. It is hard, hard, to be with out a mother. When I menstruated, I was ashamed, I couldn't tell my mother.

As a result of the students' alienation from their newly constituted families in the USA, these adolescents report that they feel an unusual sense of belonging to the school. They frequently used the metaphor of family to discuss their relationships to the teachers and other students at Gregorio Luperón.

With all of the teachers, and especially with the Spanish-speaking teachers, students demonstrated a rare ease and familiarity. Many students talked to teachers about their personal lives, the friends and family they had left behind, and their difficulties adjusting to a new language, city and school. Dominican teachers made easy, jocular reference to the place of origin of various students, kidding them about some feature of their town or city; for example, during one observation we heard a teacher tease one student about the 'beaches' in Jarabacoa, a land-locked town in the interior of the country. Perhaps the most impressive display of this jocularity, though, came when one of us observed the health teacher discuss reproduction with a group of teens. He managed to lovingly tease a young woman who had recently discovered she was pregnant and gently debunk a racial stereotype about penis size, all while teaching basic concepts and reproductive processes (4/15/05).

The cultural and linguistic background shared among students and many of the teachers enable the engagement of students' social identities in ways that are unusual in American high schools today.

Limitations of the Speech Community Bilingual Education Model at Luperón

Despite the success of Gregorio Luperón, it is not a perfect model. Obviously, the model relies on segregation of Latino newcomers. It is important to note two things about such segregation. First, the segregation at school reflects the residential segregation of Dominicans, who overwhelmingly live in Spanish-speaking, immigrant neighbourhoods. Second, the alternatives available to Dominican youth are not terribly appealing – Dominican immigrants in the highly segregated New York City school system tend to attend schools where 96% of students are poor, few or no students are white, more students have limited English skills, and 'test scores are significantly below average, and teachers are less experienced and less well educated compared to all other [immigrant] groups' (Ellen *et al.*, 2001: 24). Therefore, it is questionable whether integration would truly serve the

interests of newcomer youth. Nevertheless, the data revealed that segregation contributes to two limitations – the limited range of English for these students, and the lack of experience with other cultural groups and the potential for the formation of stereotypes.

Although the school serves well the English language needs of the students to pass the English Language Regents and to function in their immediate community, it is not clear how their sociolinguistic isolation serves students to go beyond the immediate community. In the focus groups, we often heard admiration for the school model, alongside ambivalence and impatience. Some students felt their English is insufficient to fulfil their communicative needs outside of the Washington Heights community and with English native speakers. One student told us, '*Yo hablo el inglés de la calle. No el inglés normal.*' 'I speak the English of the street, not 'normal' English.' (Interview, 10/29/03). Another newcomer said, '*Yo lo entiendo, pero no lo hablo nice, very good.*' 'I understand it, but I don't speak it nice, very good.' (Focus group 5, 3/8/04).

The sense that their English is not sufficient to *defenderse en la calle*, or take care of oneself in the street, was shared among many of the students in the focus groups. One student told one of us that Gregorio Luperón was like an 'an umbilical cord' that nourishes and yet limits the range of motion and freedom.

The social isolation in which these newcomers find themselves also leads to the formation of stereotypes which remain unchallenged. Students interact only with other Latinos at school. Our survey of 50 students who had been at the high school less than one year revealed that only a few had friends who were black or white; most socialised with extended family or, at most, with a friend from school. They knew very few white Americans at all; during focus groups, we were struck by the absence of reference to whites, the *blanquitos* to whom they referred mostly as an abstract idea.

While they knew African-Americans from the neighbourhood, some expressed a generalised sense that African-Americans were dangerous and to be avoided. In part, their fear was based on an inability to understand what might be said to them or how to respond. As one student said:

Una persona te dice algo, tú no entiendes . . . Uno dice yes, yes. Uno no sabe a que le están diciendo y a quién. En todo esto está la raza y el idioma. Porque tú eres nuevo, porque no lo entienden.

Somebody says something to you, you don't understand . . . You say 'yes, yes.' You don't know what they are saying and to whom. In all of this is race and language. Because you are new, and you don't understand them. (Focus group per 2 3/22/04)

Students also expressed a sense of competition with African-Americans. As one boy said, '*No le gusta que los latinos estén aquí, que le están quitando su territorio.*' 'They don't like that Latinos are here, that they're taking their territory.' (Focus group 2, 3/8/04).

Another limitation of the model is that, within the school, Dominicans are the norm, and students who are from other countries are occasionally made to feel uncomfortable. Students reported marked cultural differences in communication styles between students from the Dominican Republic, on the one

hand, and those from Mexico or Central America. For example, a Mexican student described the differences, while saying that she felt fine with Dominicans:

Las diferencias son muchísimas. Los dominicanos no hablan, en vez de hablar, gritan. Eso es verdad. Y los mexicanos no, hablamos un poquito bajito, rara vez que hablamos recio. Y otro es su vocabulario. Hay palabras que no les entiendo, palabras fuertes. (Focus group, per. 7, 3/22/04)

The differences are many. Dominicans don't speak, instead of speaking, they scream. That's true. And Mexicans don't, we speak quietly, very few times do we speak loudly. And the other thing is their vocabulary. There are words I don't understand, strong words.

These different styles sometimes led to minor misunderstandings and, more commonly, teasing. We noticed in the focus groups and in classroom observations that when a non-Dominican student tried to express a sense of discrimination, Dominican students often drowned out his or her comments. Aware of these differences, the teachers continuously address this problem, and both teachers and students reported that over the years the problem has diminished considerably. Still, there is evidence of a Latino hierarchy in the school, with Dominicans on top.

Conclusions

The factors that create certain limitations for the Gregorio Luperón model are the same factors that contribute to its success – a linguistically and, for the most part, culturally similar student population; the absence of native English speakers; privileging the acquisition of specific, academic English language targets over a broader communicative approach; the use of Spanish for the rigorous development of students' academic knowledge, as well as to establish relationships. Despite the limitations of the Gregorio Luperón High model, it is clear that its success is partly due to building on the *speech community's* ways of using language and culture, as well as its focus on meeting the linguistic and academic needs of a specific speech community. As such, it takes the isolation and residential segregation Dominican immigrants experience and builds upon it as its strength.

One day, as we sat in one of the stuffy, windowless teachers' offices in Gregorio Luperón High School in NYC, talking with several of the ESL teachers about how they viewed the schools' reliance on Spanish to educate its newcomer immigrant student population, an Anglo monolingual, advanced ESL teacher, referred to Dominican author Junot Díaz's novel *Drown* as he answered:

I think it works. I would go back to the metaphor of drowning . . . These adolescents have been brought out from their community, often under adverse family conditions, with new parents, new families, parents divorced, coming with an idealised view of America. If you took their language away too, it would be terribly detrimental. This is a real approach. . . . The metaphor of drowning is one I can understand. I think

of that when I look at them [the students]. I try to think of their situations. They have to have their oxygen... We have this island because students have the freedom to experiment, and yet be secure. They are not overwhelmed by traditional American high school culture. They get the best of both worlds. (Focus Group, 2/3/05)

The speech community model of the school provides the oxygen in the safe island these students need to learn and succeed socially and academically.

Rather than attempting to substitute the language use of the community, the school moves the newcomer students along the bilingual continuum of the community itself, while providing rigorous academic preparation in Spanish and English. We argue that Gregorio Luperón High provides a compelling model of schooling for Latino adolescents recently arrived in the USA, helping them negotiate their academic and social lives. It is a model that can be fruitfully adapted by any society with large, geographically concentrated immigrant adolescent speech communities.

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Notes

1. This is the actual name of the school. The teachers and principal decided that we should use it. However, we do not identify the teachers or the students by name.
2. Although bilingual education at the elementary level has received much scholarly attention, little academic scholarship has been devoted to language minority students in bilingual programmes at the secondary level. For a notable exception, see the volume by Faltis and Wolfe (1999). See also, Faltis and Hudelson (1998) and Lucas (1993).
3. For more on the history of bilingual education, see especially Crawford (2004) and García (2005).
4. Although dual language education models are favoured in public discourse and many US school systems are developing such programmes, in reality there are few such programmes. For more on this in New York City, see Torres-Guzman (2002).
5. This has also been noted in the case of English immersion high schools in Hong Kong by Marsh *et al.* (2000).
6. For more on this, see New Visions, no date.
7. The absence of English Language Learners from most NYC high schools has been a source of conflict between the New York City Department of Education and the

- Coalition for English Language Learners Educators in NYC. This was on the agenda of their meetings in spring 2005.
8. In New York City, Latino students made up 37.8% of all public school students in 2001. Latinos in New York city numbered 2,160,554 in the US 2000 census, making up 27% of the total New York population.
 9. We use speech communities in the sense given to us by Fishman (1972: 22): 'A speech community is one, all of whose members share at least a single speech variety and the norms for its appropriate use'.
 10. According to Lave and Wenger, communities of practice are groups who interact and communicate regularly and have shared ways of communicating, including the use of two languages.
 11. Dominicans constitute the fourth largest Latino group in the USA, numbering 1,041,910 in the 2000 US Census.
 12. Only 26% of the four-year cohort took the English Regents and passed it in 2003–2004. This figure is considerably lower than the state average of 80%, although it is comparable to those international high schools that use standardised tests (some use portfolio assessment) and higher than high schools with a large recently arrived Latino population.
 13. Latino students in New York City have the largest drop-out rate of all groups. For the class of 2001, 25.9% of Latino High School students dropped out, compared to 22.6% of African Americans, 11.9% of whites, and 11.3% of Asian students. For more information on Latinos in New York City, see <http://www.kfny.org/publications/CCC%20Keeping%20Track%20of%20Latino%20youth.pdf>
 14. Single case studies are particularly appropriate when the case is unique, rare, and promising (Yin 2003).
 15. Elite bilingual education is, according to Mejía (2002: 45) 'the whole range of programmes that provide bilingual education to highly educated, higher socio-economic status, usually majority-language-speaking groups'.
 16. The education of adolescent students with interrupted formal education is an increasingly important subject in the USA. For more on this topic, see García (1999) and Marsh (1995).
 17. The school has recently moved to teach more subjects in English in response not to their own sense of what is educationally sound with these students, but to pressure from some educational authorities.

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