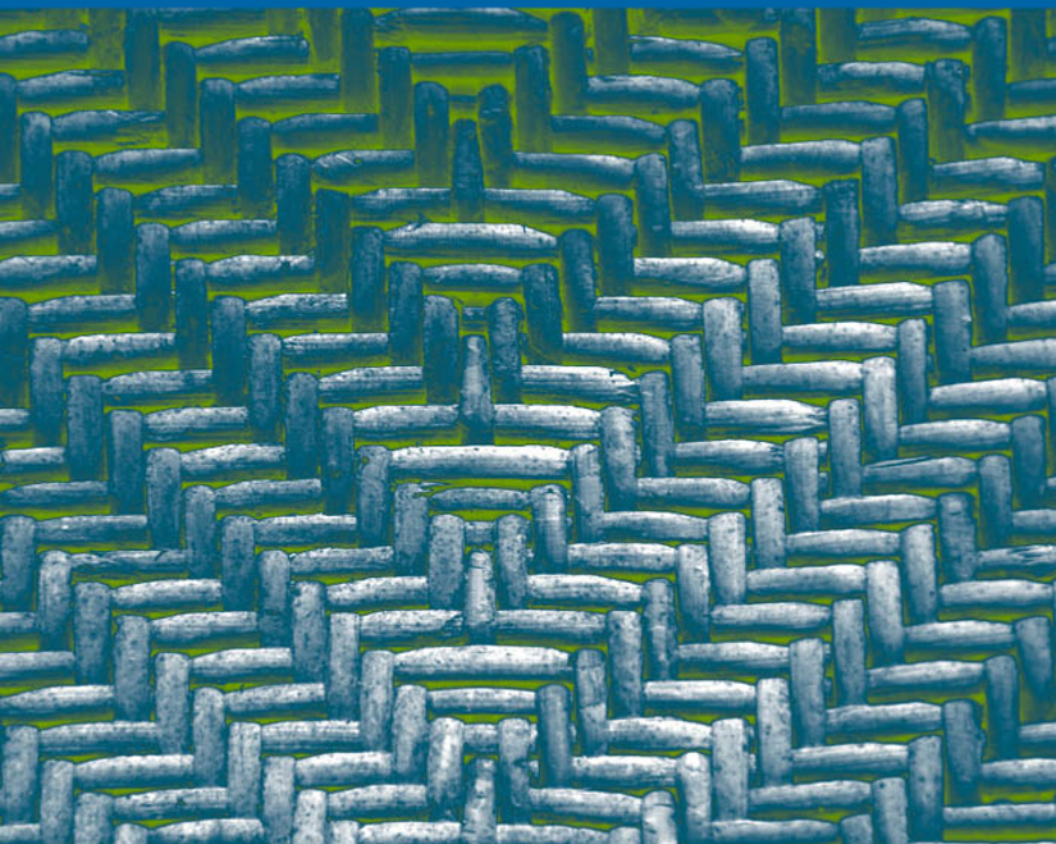


LATINO EDUCATION

An Agenda for Community Action Research



Edited by Pedro Pedraza • Melissa Rivera

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Action Research

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Latino Education

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*A Volume of the National Latino/a Education
Research and Policy Project*

Edited by

Pedro Pedraza

Melissa Rivera

*Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College,
City University of New York*



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This volume is dedicated to Dr. Enrique (Henry) Torres Trueba for the countless hours you gave to those who needed your help, for the compassionate manner and humane mentorship you offered, for the humor and joy you brought to gatherings, and for the *cariño* and *respeto* you shared with all who crossed your path.

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Contents

Foreword	xi
Preface	xiii

PART I Introduction— Creating the Collective Vision

Chapter 1	Origins of the National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project (NLERAP) <i>Pedro Pedraza and Melissa Rivera</i>	3
Chapter 2	A New Vision for Latino/a Education: A Comparative Perspective on Research Agendas <i>Carmen I. Mercado and Lorri Johnson Santamaría</i>	11

PART II Sociohistorical Revisioning

Chapter 3	Setting the Context: Historical Perspectives on Latino/a Education <i>Victoria-María MacDonald and Karen Monkman</i>	47
Chapter 4	The Intellectual Presence of the Deficit View of Spanish-Speaking Children in the Educational Literature During the 20th Century <i>Barbara M. Flores</i>	75

- Chapter 5** Explanatory Models of Latino Education
During the Reform Movement of the 1980s 99
Martha Montero-Sieburth

PART III Exposing the Colonizing Effects of Reform

- Chapter 6** Latinos and Education: A Statistical Portrait 157
Héctor R. Cordero-Guzmán
- Chapter 7** Standards-Based Reform and the Latino/a
Community: Opportunities for Advocacy 165
Raúl González
- Chapter 8** Student Learning and Assessment: Setting
an Agenda 185
Robert Rueda
- Chapter 9** California's Standards Movement: How
English Learners Have Been Left Out
of the Equation for Success 205
Teresa I. Márquez-López
- Chapter 10** *Con Pasión y Con Coraje*: The Schooling
of Latino/a Students and Their
Teachers' Education 231
*Jaime G. A. Grinberg, Katia Paz Goldfarb,
and Elizabeth Saavedra*

PART IV Collapsing the Paradox, Imagining New Possibilities

- Chapter 11** Fighting the Backlash: Decolonizing
Perspectives and Pedagogies in
Neocolonial Times 261
Carlos Tejeda and Kris D. Gutierrez
- Chapter 12** The Educational Sovereignty of Latino/a
Students in the United States 295
Luis C. Moll and Richard Ruiz
- Chapter 13** Social Action and the Politics
of Collaboration 321
Olga A. Vásquez

Chapter 14	Theoretical Perspectives on the Underachievement of Latino/a Students in U.S. Schools: Toward a Framework for Culturally Additive Schooling <i>Anthony De Jesús</i>	343
PART V Actualizing the Future		
Chapter 15	Latino/a Families' Epistemology <i>Nitza M. Hidalgo</i>	375
Chapter 16	Latino/a Education in the 21st Century <i>Raymond V. Padilla</i>	403
Chapter 17	Democracy, Education, and Human Rights in the United States: Strategies of Latino/a Empowerment <i>Raymond Rocco</i>	425
PART VI Realizing the Power of Community Action		
Chapter 18	Reflections on Collaborative Research and the NLERAP Process <i>Pedro Pedraza</i>	457
Afterword	A Project of Hope: Defining a New Agenda for Latino/a Education in the 21st Century <i>Sonia Nieto</i>	463
Appendix A	NLERAP: Education Research Framework and Agenda	471
Appendix B	Incorporating Latino Communities into Educational Research: Statement on Methodology	529
About the Contributors		539
Author Index		549
Subject Index		559

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Foreword

The invitation to write the foreword for this volume was originally offered to Dr. Enrique (Henry) Torres Trueba. Unfortunately, his fight with cancer precluded his writing it, and we are honored to have been asked to write it for him. Dr. Trueba passed away peacefully at his Houston home on Saturday, July 22, 2004.

The lifetime scholarship of Dr. Trueba has inspired and motivated hundreds of Latino/a students, teachers, university faculty, and community people. His lifelong commitment to social justice and dedication to issues of equity is legendary in academia. Dr. Trueba's legacy will serve forever as a benchmark of excellence in scholarship and advocacy for the next generation of Latino/a research scholars.

This book is evidence of the powerful, important, and burgeoning changes in the academy for Latino/a researchers compared to when Dr. Trueba began his career as an educational ethnographer in the early 1960s. Although too many Latino/a communities continue to be marginalized and lack access to educational success and economic independence, a growing number of nationally recognized Latino/a scholars now have positions of impact and influence at research and teaching universities throughout the country. These academics are disseminating their work in major mainstream publishing venues in order to provide historically neglected and underrepresented perspectives in traditional areas of study.

It is not easy for authentic transformation to take place inside the academy. The work in this volume bears witness that the bureaucratic and often racist practices and rigid infrastructures of higher educational institutions (i.e., hiring, tenure, publication, grants, funding, etc.)

although daunting, have failed to keep out or silence the strong voices of societal change and fairness. That is one of the common threads in all of the pieces. Dr. Trueba's well-known book, *Raising Silent Voices*, is an apt description for this volume.

We were blessed to have a final audience with Dr. Trueba several weeks prior to his death. In his bed, lying immobile, and in excruciating pain, Dr. Trueba shared a lifetime of wisdom. He pointed to his heart, and as only a sage can, emphatically whispered, "In the end, this is all you have. I have my love, affection, and my integrity."

Dr. T.'s masterful vision and scholarly insights have illuminated the pathway for those of us who have the privilege to serve our communities in our respective academic arenas. This book is offered in the spirit of a man who died the way he lived—with love, affection, and integrity. *Gracias, profesor.*

—José Cintrón and Lila Jacobs
California State University, Sacramento

Preface

Welcome to the National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project's (NLERAP) collective journey to create a vision and research action plan for improving the education and well-being of Latino/a children, families, and communities. This volume provides the sociohistorical landscape and conceptual foundation for this research framework and agenda, situating NLERAP's efforts within a political and cultural context and illustrating how the agenda can offer important ideas about Latino/a education.

The essays contained in this volume are written primarily by Latino/a scholars who have worked on the complex and dynamic educational issues of U.S. Latino/a communities for decades. Their perspectives go beyond conventional paradigms, discourses, arguments, and socio-political standpoints. In addition to exposing the historical and current dehumanizing and destructive ideologies and injustices of education policies and practices, these authors provide a visionary orientation that promises a future beneficial to all, one in which democratic ideals are realized and a nation becomes truly prepared for participation in an interdependent global society.

We invite you to use this volume in your classrooms, community organizations, and professional gatherings as a resource and catalyst for debate and discussion. Ultimately, we hope that you are inspired to action—to use your individual and collective voice, talents, insights, and efforts to improve public education.

OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME

We have been honored with a Foreword by two longtime students and friends of Dr. Enrique (Henry) Torres Trueba, written on his behalf (Cintrón and Jacobs). His legendary wisdom and pioneering spirit have inspired the authors of this book (and many others) and the entire NLERAP pilgrimage. Thank you, Dr. Trueba. We humbly commit ourselves collectively to continue to struggle for justice and create new spaces for unlimited imagination.

NLERAP's story is one of transformative and critically conscious healing and collective rebirth. Like skilled and creative artisans, the scholars weave a tapestry of insight and innovation, helping to illuminate possibilities for true freedom of the human spirit to learn and evolve.

Imagine for a moment a literary theater production, opening with *Act I: The Dawn*, in which the vision of a collective is illumined. Pedraza and Rivera begin the tale by sharing, in this introductory section, *Creating the Collective Vision*, the origins of NLERAP, highlighting the genesis and development of this community action effort. Mercado and Santamaría then situate the NLERAP initiative within a broader context of educational agendas, focusing on the power of a collective voice.

In *Act II: The Storm*, the pain, destruction, and ravages of imperialism and practices of domination are revisited with a critical lens. This second section, *Sociohistorical Revisioning*, presents a sociopolitical analysis of the history of U.S. Latino/a students' public schooling experiences (MacDonald & Monkman) and reviews the educational research literature on Latinos/as over the past century (Flores; Montero-Sieburth).

Act III: The Aftermath exposes the institutional and instructional wounds created from these dehumanizing structures imposed on Latino/a communities, offering insights into possibilities for change. This section, *Exposing the Colonizing Effects of Reform*, focuses on the present educational reality of Latinos/as, including the current demographic situation of U.S. Latino/a students (Cordero-Guzmán) as well as potentially troublesome policies and practices significantly affecting our communities, such as the standardization movement and teacher education (González; Rueda; Márquez-López; Grinberg et al.).

Act IV: New Soil invites us to experience moments of hope through stories of resistance, resilience, and renewal, in which efforts to decolonize minds and humanize the educational process are described.

Collapsing the Paradox, Imagining New Possibilities challenges the previous section's detrimental ideologies by presenting visionary theories, methodologies, and programs for reshaping Latino/a education (Tejeda et al.; Moll & Ruiz; Vásquez; De Jesús).

Act V: The Sowing offers new theories of education for Latino/a communities, in which all dimensions of children, young people, and their communities are considered. The section, *Actualizing the Future*, explores new paradigm development for conceptualizing NLERAP's collective efforts toward more equitable, democratic, transformative, and humane education for Latino/a communities (Hidalgo; Padilla; Rocco).

Act VI: The Harvest invites us to consider a new, uncharted landscape for Latino/a education. This final section, *Realizing the Power of Community Action*, imagines a world with limitless possibilities by first offering various changes needed in order to realize NLERAP's agenda in action and then sharing thoughts about true collaborative research for liberating education (Pedraza). In the Afterword, Nieto discusses how NLERAP is an agenda, that offers "a new research paradigm, one that is respectful and collaborative, purposeful and humble, hopeful and visionary."

In our Appendix, we include NLERAP's agenda document and methods statement so you can more directly engage with the vision of hundreds of scholars, educators, and community advocates. The agenda includes NLERAP's guiding principles, approach to research, initial areas of research, and action plan. The NLERAP initiative is centered on revisioning past educational reform efforts and creating holistic and innovative relationships, theories, and approaches for improving Latino/a education.

With this visionary intellectual foundation and engaged spirit of transformation, we hope the chapters in this volume will inspire you to seed fertile gardens in your schools and neighborhoods and harvest the fruits of educational equity and social justice for Latino/a communities.

—Pedro Pedraza and Melissa Rivera
Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter
College, City University of New York
National Latino/a Education Research
and Policy Project (NLERAP)

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We would like to thank our colleagues, friends, and family members who have supported and nurtured NLERAP's efforts and especially the creation and production of this volume. Thank you to the following people and organizations: all of the contributing authors; NLERAP board members; NLERAP regional meeting participants and methods statement co-authors; our editor Naomi Silverman, her assistant Erica Kica, and everyone at Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; Matthew Byrd and TechBooks; the Ford Foundation; the Rockefeller Foundation; the Annie E. Casey Foundation; the Hazen Foundation; the Spencer Foundation; Dr. Felix Matos Rodríguez, Vicky Nuñez, and the *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños* at Hunter College; Dr. Barbara Flores, Dr. Albert Karnig and California State University, San Bernardino; and Dr. Enrique Murillo, Dr. Susana Flores, and the *Journal of Latinos and Education*.

Latino Education
An Agenda for Community
Action Research

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PART I

Introduction—Creating the Collective Vision

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Origins of the National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project (NLERAP)¹

Pedro Pedraza
Melissa Rivera

*Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College,
City University of New York
National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project
(NLERAP)*

The National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project (NLERAP) is the story of a collective journey of informed and actively engaged members of the Latino/a education community.² It is a story of resistance and renewal, about more than 200 people who have become sufficiently incensed by U.S. backlash education policies and practices to act. It is a tale of struggle, transformation, transcendence, and

¹The authors would like to thank NLERPP project associate Vicky Núñez for her contributions to this chapter.

²NLERAP began in February 2000 as the National Latino/a Education Research Agenda Project with the goal of developing a research agenda for U.S. Latino/a public education with community members, school practitioners and university researchers. Once our collective agenda document was published in 2003 (please see Appendix A), NLERAP's advisory board renamed NLERAP, the National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project to encompass NLERAP's broader efforts, including its community action research projects and policy work.

proposed liberation; a response to incendiary and suffocating educational politics; and a statement about a vision for truly holistic learning for Latinos/as and others. How can we transcend the violence of our educational policies and classroom practices and instead cloak our communities with peaceful and passionate exploration of self and others within a more humane and just world? It is in this spirit that NLERAP was birthed.

RATIONALE

The National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project (NLERAP) is an initiative that has developed over the past 5 years to create a vision for transforming U.S. Latino/a education. NLERAP's goal is to articulate a Latino/a perspective on research-based school reform and to use research as a guide to improve the public school systems that serve Latino/a students and communities.

Why craft a research agenda for Latino/a education? The first motivation for NLERAP's work, including this collective volume, is to respond to the fact that the Latino/a community has historically been underserved by U.S. public school systems. This miseducation of Latino/a communities, reflective of larger sociohistorical and economic inequalities, has resisted various reform efforts over the decades. As a result, by most measures of academic success, large numbers of U.S. Latino/a students are failing miserably, or rather, as NLERAP believes, U.S. public schools are miserably failing Latino/a students. As we begin a new century, more attention to these educational issues is required because of the tremendous population increase and projected growth of Latino/a communities in the United States. This reality reinforces a sense of urgency within our community and informs the desperate need to create schools and educational spaces that are responsive to an increasingly multicultural, multilingual, and transnational population.

Beyond responding to the oppressive educational situation of Latinos/as, NLERAP participants and these volume authors also gathered to envision and collectively create more just, equitable, and humane educational experiences for U.S. Latino/a communities. For decades, research that sought to improve education for Latino/a students was conducted by non-Latino/a scholars on issues ranging from immigration to bilingual education to standardized testing and has been based on unquestioned assumptions about the educational needs of Latino/a communities. That research has shaped both public opinion and social policy regarding the educational issues affecting Latino/a

students and has left our community with the challenges imposed by the legacy of oppressive theories (such as deficit models, among others). Given our formative experiences as Latino/a researchers, educators, and activists, governmental and philanthropic infrastructures have not been designed in ways that allow Latino/a communities (nor other nondominant communities) to assess or define our own educational issues. Such approaches have served to marginalize the perspectives of Latino/a community members. We believe that the maintenance of poor educational outcomes for Latino/a students attending U.S. public schools is partly related to the existing, culturally myopic research practices and policy-making structures in the United States. Because the Latino/a community now possesses the human and intellectual capital in the form of academic researchers, educators, and community advocates, we believe it is imperative that we work within a framework that we create and own. To this end, NLERAP began a national dialogue with the aim of constructing a framework and plan for the design, implementation, and assessment of pedagogical innovation, liberating practice, and more democratic educational policy, by and for Latinos/as.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for the National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project is grounded in three overlapping areas of scholarship and activism that are reflected within the collection of chapters in this volume: (a) critical studies, illuminating and analyzing the status of people of color (and other oppressed peoples) in the United States; (b) Latino/a educational research, capturing the sociohistorical, cultural, and political schooling experiences of U.S. Latino/a communities; and (c) participatory action research, exemplifying an action-oriented methodology for truly transformative education.

Critical Studies

This literature (which includes critical race theory, critical pedagogy, feminist theories, resistance theories, and others) provides a framework for understanding Latinos/as' status in the United States, including our historical and current social, political, and economic marginalization and the resultant inequitable access to and engagement with quality education. Authors in this volume use this critical standpoint to unearth the colonial and oppressive situation of Latinos/as and create a

new vision for transformative possibilities (for examples, please see Chapters 11 and 14, Tejeda and Gutierrez, and De Jesús, respectively).

Latino/a Educational Research

Over the past three decades, Latino/a scholars have engaged in innovative research efforts to explore the sociocultural, political, linguistic, educational, and community aspects of life in U.S. Latino/a families, schools, and neighborhoods. Some of these pioneering, indigenous activist academics share their theories and research in this volume, including Trueba's longtime efforts applying anthropological perspectives to education research; Nieto's research on multicultural, Puerto Rican, and teacher education; Moll, Ruiz, Mercado, and others' work on community knowledge and educational sovereignty; Gutierrez and others' theories on the impact of public policy reforms on Latino/a students; Vásquez and others' research on community action after-school programs; among others. This collective body of work on Latino/a education has shaped and influenced the vision for NLERAP's agenda and action plan.

Participatory Action Research

NLERAP is committed to a research approach that seeks to uncover the emancipatory potential of education. Thus research methodology, that is, how the research is designed, conducted, and analyzed, is central to our work. Some key characteristics of NLERAP's methodology have been identified, including our commitment to collaborative and participatory, interdisciplinary, longitudinal processes that encourage reflection, transform research and teaching, generate new understandings and theories that support the improvement of Latino/a education, influence educational public policy, and are responsive to, maintain, and protect the integrity of human rights.

NLERAP is thus grounded in principles of developmental, participatory action research, especially its philosophical and ideological commitment, which holds that every person has the capacity to know, analyze, and reflect on reality in order to become true agents in their own lives (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Hinsdale et al., 1995; Maguire, 1987; Park, 1989). For instance, Hinsdale et al. (1995) describe the approach as seeking

to eliminate monopolistic control over knowledge creation. Participatory research respects people's own capability and potential to produce knowledge and to analyze it and expects the community to participate in the entire research process. It becomes a means of taking action for development and is an educational process of mobilization for development. (p. 340)

The actual process of developing the NLERAP agenda adhered to these principles of collaboration and democratic participation, incorporating several hundred participants in discussion and consensus building.

THE ORIGINS OF NLERPP

The NLERAP Process

The NLERAP initiative began with an initial planning meeting in February 2000. At this seminal gathering, educators, policy advocates, foundation representatives, and community activists decided that in order for this effort to be most meaningful and productive for our communities as well as educational contexts in general, we would have to embrace a new approach. Participants affirmed that the agenda development process would be supremely important to the outcome of the document. That is, what the agenda said (its vision and priorities) would be determined by how it was created and who participated in its creation. Thus began the two-year process of gathering hundreds of people involved in and impacted by the education of Latino/a communities to discuss, imagine, and innovate.

In March 2000, an advisory board was developed for NLERAP with a commitment to equitable representation via gender, ethnicity, culture, region, and diversity of roles within the educational process. Our board members include university researchers, policy advocates, school faculty and personnel, education administrators, community organization representatives, local activists, and artists from various Latino/a cultural groups (including Chicanos/as and Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, South and Central Americans, Cubans and Dominicans, and others) from nine U.S. regions, including Puerto Rico (see appendix B for list of board members).

Between April 2000 and January 2002, NLERAP gathered educators and advocates from nine regions into focus groups (including the Northwest, Southern California, the Midwest, the Southwest, the Northeast, the New York metropolitan area, the Washington, DC area,

the Southeast, and Puerto Rico). These focus groups created spaces to initiate dialogues among participants about what is most needed in research about Latino/a educational communities. Although there were some regional variations, overall, a consensus arose about K–12 educational research for Latinos/as and is outlined in NLERAP's agenda document (please see appendix A). Our hope is that the research framework and agenda will advise and guide researchers, policy makers, educators, and institutions on important educational issues impacting Latino/a communities. Mostly, we hope it will inspire readers like you to actively engage in efforts to improve the education and lives of Latinos/as and others.

NLERAP's Vision and Action Plan

What emerged from the participatory and democratic 2-year process was a clear need for a collaborative and action-oriented approach to Latino/a educational research. This approach includes four guiding principles: (1) honor sociocultural perspectives; (2) recognize the sociocultural, political, economic, and historical context of Latino/a education; (3) *co-educar comunidades*; and (4) promote social justice and democratic ideals. These principles developed from lively discussions about how NLERAP's plan of research would differ from others, in essence, what this collective effort could contribute to both Latino/a communities and national educational practices and policies. The approach is also grounded in a participatory methodology, illuminating our commitment to developmental, community-engaged, action-oriented research that aspires to address issues of educational equity and social justice. This orientation toward community participation and collective movement is the soul of NLERAP's vision for action (please see appendix A).

NLERAP board members and regional meeting participants worked to first develop a framework for all research (as evidenced by the guiding principles and methodology). Eventually, some areas of research were prioritized in order to begin projects with schools, communities, and universities. Some questions that guided the development of our areas of research include: What are the current, important issues to which we must respond as a community? What local issues do we have information about that can and should be shared with broader audiences? What questions do we have that few others are asking and that would benefit our communities? The four areas of research that

were identified include: (a) assessment and accountability; (b) teacher and administrator education and professional development; (c) arts in education; and (d) sociocultural, political, economic, and historical context of Latino/a education.

Some areas of research (for instance, assessment and accountability) emerged in response to widespread, destructive practices and policies severely impacting Latino/a students and communities. Others (such as arts in education) emerged organically from the indigenous wisdom within Latino/a communities' history and culture of practice in human development. That is, there was a simultaneous top-down (response to imposed structures and processes) and grassroots (affirmation of our communities' knowledge and assets) perspective on the selection of these areas of research. This list was conceived as a starting point for our collective work, and, by no means, as a comprehensive list of issues NLERAP community researchers will address.

All of NLERAP's research efforts will seek to initiate change on three different levels: (a) educational institutions that serve Latino/a students, meaning create more effective schools and educational policies; (b) instructional practices that can improve classroom environments; and (c) interpersonal relations between schools and Latino/a communities that can allow schools to better appreciate and use Latino/a community resources and assets.

NLERAP also developed an action plan for implementing the collective vision of the agenda, including the development of action research projects with local communities in Latino/a schools. The design and implementation of research projects that carry out the agenda will constitute a cohesive national Latino/a educational research program, responsive to local conditions and needs via a unifying focus on practice and policy. This effort will build, whenever possible, on existing collaborations with local and national education reform efforts in order to facilitate a national infrastructure to support the agenda. The aim of NLERAP's research efforts is to contribute to classroom and school practices, local community issues, state educational policies, and the field of educational research.

Ultimately, the NLERAP initiative is a collective act of faith in the human spirit to be free and whole. Our hope is that in our collaborative struggles and efforts, democratic, inspiring, and inviting educational spaces are created for Latino/a children, young people, families, and communities to learn, evolve, and soar. The volume is NLERAP's conceptual story, exposing and exploring the life-crushing history of U.S. Latinos/as, unmasking the debilitating and rigidly confining current

landscape, and encouraging our collective imaginations to envision a boundless future for Latino/a minds and souls. Thank you for journeying with us.

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A New Vision for Latino/a Education: A Comparative Perspective on Research Agendas

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INTRODUCTION

To improve education in enduring ways, we will need to strengthen educational research, and to do that, we must change the circumstances that have historically constrained the development of educational study. (Lagemann, 2000, p. xv)

Despite its limitations (see Kaestle, 1993 for an incisive analysis), “research can and must play a central role in strengthening our educational system” (Rita Colwell, director of the National Science Foundation, 1999). For the past three years, overwhelming national attention has been given to No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) legislation mandating the use of “scientific based research,” specifically randomized

experiments, as the tool of choice for improving education for all of America's schoolchildren and youth. Many reputable scholars have voiced concern that federal sponsorship of one specific approach to educational research fails to recognize the unique and complex nature of educational science (See Berliner and others in the theme issue on Scientific Research in Education of *Educational Researcher*, 31(8), November 2002).

Historically, independent scholars from diverse communities have voiced similar reactions long before the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Although little known, George I. Sanchez (1906–1972) has been described as the father of the movement for quality education for Mexican Americans, and was among the first to conduct research that questioned the use of standardized tests for Spanish-speaking Mexican-American children in the 1930s and 1940s. Presently, these enduring concerns are energizing local forces and giving rise to new types of social movements coalescing around needs that include but go beyond education. One such movement is the National Latino/a Education Research Agenda Project (NLERAP), an independent national collaborative of practitioners, community leaders, foundation officers, and academicians with broad experience and expertise, who have joined voluntarily to exercise intellectual leadership in formulating an organized, comprehensive, and coordinated response to the economic hardships and educational challenges U.S. Latino/a communities continue to face. It is an initiative that arises in times of a "conceptual-based economy," in which "people's livelihoods are depending less on what they are producing with their hands and more on what they are producing with their brains" (Colwell, 1999). To this day, the promise of "ending poverty" and attaining "social justice" made in the aftermath of civil rights struggles remain an elusive goal.

African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Latino/a children continue to receive an inferior preparation; and those who manage to earn high school degrees, and many do not, are at best prepared for low-paying menial jobs in the labor market. Research continues to demonstrate combined effects of standards-based high-stakes testing that reduce the intellectual challenge of the curriculum, augment the achievement gap between Whites and non-Whites, and exacerbate dropout rates among Latino/a and other "minority" youth. Appearing to be sensible solutions to real educational problems that respond to public concerns for government and school accountability, these measures do not auger well for life chances of students from

communities already experiencing high levels of poverty, attendant social problems, and unemployment, in the new global and information economies. Meanwhile, programs proven successful according to local criteria are overlooked in policies and practices of the federal government's reactionary school reform efforts (What Works for Latino/a Youth, September 2000; Delpit, 2003).

In keeping with the view which describes education as local responsibility, the National Latino/a Educational Research Agenda Project (NLERAP) seeks to reframe prevailing debate and thinking on school reform by defining an agenda that harnesses the power of scientific research and local expertise to determine the best ways to educate children for betterment of Latino/a communities and our society. Specifically, the NLERAP seeks to

- a. synthesize and make accessible the best available knowledge to address the educational needs of Latino/a students;
- b. organize and coordinate collaborative, cross-disciplinary research on critical topics applying theoretical frameworks and methodological procedures generating valid and robust knowledge of practical and theoretical significance;
- c. and provide guidance and advice on what constitutes quality educational research for Latino/a students.

How different is this agenda from others that surfaced on the educational landscape in recent years? In this chapter, we draw comparisons between NLERAP and other relevant, influential, or potentially influential educational research agendas of the past two decades, situating them historically in order to highlight what is distinctive about NLERAP. First, we draw comparisons between the NLERAP agenda and the National Research Council's *Improving Schooling for Language-Minority Children: A Research Agenda* (August & Hakuta, 1997), the most influential national agenda giving direction to federally sponsored research on the education of Latino/a students. We then compare NLERAP to two independent agendas that are the result of local advocacy and concerns about the needs of African American and American Indian/Alaska Native communities, namely 1991's American Educational Research Association's *Commission on Research in Black Education* (CORIBE), and a set of agendas emanating from U.S. indigenous communities, including the *National Dialogue Project on American Indian*

Education (1987–1988), the *American Indian and Alaska Native Education Research Agenda* (2001), and the *National Congress of American Indians Critical Initiatives* (2003). Specifically, comparative analyses will examine

- a. agenda setting processes;
- b. identified research priorities;
- c. and theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches of each agenda presented.

In addition to establishing ways in which NLERAP is different from featured agendas, each analysis is framed in response to the National Research Council's Latino/a research agenda, which has as its foundation federal U.S. support. From the framework provided by this agenda, areas of consensual agreement among other agendas will be identified, underscoring strong commonalities resulting from independent efforts and potential for joint future educational research endeavors. This work begins, with the premise that the federal government has been largely responsible for generating major research agendas affecting the education of Latino/a students, shaping the debate and thinking on research benefiting Latino/a students by providing financial support for the study of issues and topics with implications for federal policy and practices.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND RESEARCH ON LATINO/A STUDENTS

Historical Overview

From the 1960s to the 1970s, the federal government assumed an unprecedented role in initiating and supporting educational research in minority communities as a form of social policy (Kaestle, 2001; Lagemann, 2000). Efforts to improve schooling for students from Latino/a communities (and other marginalized populations) has a long history, most evident in the independent school movement that grew in response to school segregation (or the prohibition of schooling), and has proven successful with African American and Latino/a populations. As San Miguel (1987) eloquently states, Latinos "have been active participants in shaping their own destinies" (p. 468). However, the social and political movements of the 1960s and 1970s, which demanded

educational equity through litigation and legislation in civil rights and bilingual education, brought national attention to the issue. Unusual by today's standards, the response of Lyndon Johnson's administration (1963–1969) to a complex problem was swift: to focus both on "economic opportunity" and on "educational opportunity" through social welfare programs known as the Great Society and War on Poverty (Kaestle, 2001).

For the first time in the nation's history, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965), considered the centerpiece of the War on Poverty, offered grants and services to schools serving low-income areas, bilingual communities, and American Indians. In 1968, ESEA (Goals 2000 during the Clinton administration and the NCLB 2002 Act under Bush II) was amended to include Title VII, better known as the Bilingual Education Act. The 1978 reauthorization of ESEA added a research agenda for English language learners (ELL), which was congressionally mandated and produced the beginnings of knowledge on and about the education of Latino/a children. The infrastructure for research resulting from this change has played a significant role in shaping this fundamental information base. It was an infrastructure superimposed on an existing structure, which included the National Institute for Education (NIE) and the Center for Educational Statistics (CES) as central components. Created in 1972 during the Nixon administration and under the advice of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the president's chief advisor for domestic affairs, NIE's mission was to conduct research for purposes of improving education (Cohen & Barnes, 1999).

August and Kaestle (1997) describe how the federal research infrastructure changed to address the research needs of Latino/a communities. According to these authors, Section 742 of the 1978 reauthorization directed the (then) Office of Education to develop a national research program for bilingual education, coordinating the research activities with the NIE, the Office of Bilingual Education (later, OBEMLA when the Department of Education was created), the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), and other appropriate agencies. The Education Division Coordinating Committee, which became known as the "Part C Committee," was created in the spring of 1978. The committee organized requests for research identified in the legislation into three general categories: (a) studies to assess national needs for bilingual education; (b) studies designed to improve quality and effectiveness of services for students; and (c) studies designed to improve Title VII program management and operations. Therefore, studies resulting from

Part C were conducted in the context of justification and accountability. As an interagency committee, the Part C Committee represented competing interests, as control over the Part C research funds shifted over time, for example, from NIE-funded basic research studies to evaluation studies funded under the Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation (OPBE).

NIE (reorganized as part of OERI in 1985, and as of November 5, 2002, the Academy of Education Sciences) began to prosper through the sponsorship of research on schools, teaching, and learning (Cohen & Barnes, 1999). Basic research by esteemed cultural anthropologists such as Courtney Cazden at Harvard, Fred Erickson at the University of Pennsylvania, and Shirley Heath at Stanford and sociolinguists such as John Gumperz and Dell Hymes, broadened our understandings of language, culture, and learning in diverse school contexts. Through the quality of work they produced, NIE researchers also socialized a new generation of Latino/a and other ethnic scholars to the power and significance of ethnographic and microethnographic approaches to understand fundamentally social processes such as teaching and learning in minority communities. The concept of “culturally responsive teaching” is one construct that emerged as a by-product of litigation—the *Lau v. Nichols* case that sought to address access to quality education for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The Lau Remedies mandated instructional accommodations for culturally and linguistically diverse learners, thereby reflecting the view that suggests how we teach should be adapted to how children learn. To this day, “culturally responsive pedagogy” continues to be developed even as the imposition of a standardized, core curriculum impedes or subverts its application. It is instructive, although not surprising, that “culturally responsive education” has been a construct of great saliency to Latino/a and African American researchers and not to those considered part of mainstream educational research, in general, and research on teaching, illustrating the importance of theoretical frameworks orienting educational research in nonmainstream communities (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

However, the research program that began to flourish as part of President Johnson’s social programs came to a screeching halt. As the educational historian Ellen Lageman (2000) reports, Johnson was a strong believer in education and education became the tool of choice for addressing what were fundamentally economic problems: issues of unemployment and minimum wage. Johnson appointed John W. Gardner, president of the Carnegie Foundation, as chair of the task force charged

with planning the administration's initial education policies, and subsequently appointing Gardner as his secretary of health, education, and welfare. In contrast, Kaestle (1993) reports the Reagan administration's policies and priorities were shaped by policy recommendations crafted by the Heritage Foundation under the title "Mandate for Leadership." The mission of this conservative think-tank is "to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense" (<http://www.heritage.org>).

A Nation at Risk (1983), arguably the most influential of the educational manifestos of the last two decades, was one result of the influence of Reagan's educational advisors. *A Nation at Risk* brought back the idea of standards, which had surfaced as a concern in the aftermath of World War II, and high-stakes testing based on "common sense" rather than research. Two decades later recommendations from this report affect educational policies in states throughout the nation, and these policies, in turn, are now affecting the lives of all children and teachers in the nation's public schools, for better or worse.

By 1984, the Part C Committee was disbanded by Secretary Terrence Bell. The following year (1985), the National Institutes for Education was shut down and the level of funding for educational research sharply decreased. This was an unfortunate turn of events because, as Ellen Lagemann, president of the National Academy of Education, comments, during the 1970s and 1980s researchers moved toward more powerful understandings of and approaches to research (2000). In particular, the use of interpretive studies of educational processes brought culture into more central view. Efforts also were made to link scholarship more closely to practice designed to address educational inequalities. One federally funded study with major impact on classroom teachers is the study of community knowledge and classroom practice, popularly known as "funds of knowledge." This study is noteworthy because its innovative research design combined both basic and applied research, two usually independent components in the research cycle referred to as research and development. In doing so, it responds to the concerns of classroom teachers who are cognizant that waiting for the instructional applications of basic research may not allow them to appropriately address the needs of a diverse and constantly changing student population.

Although the federal government has been the biggest sponsor of educational research, and no doubt influential studies impacting

teaching-learning processes in Latino/a and other ethnic communities have resulted from this sponsorship, all too often, research is vulnerable to political influences. Research is affected by funding and policy priorities, which, in turn, affect the type and quality of research produced and the usability and impact of this scholarship. One outcome of these political entanglements is federally sponsored research of the highest practical and theoretical significance according to local criteria, is often the very work dismissed by policy makers. This brief overview (see Box 2.1) also makes clear the need for a new and independent infrastructure for supporting research on the education of children from minority communities and NLERAP represents one step in this direction.

Box 2.1:

A Chronology of Post–World War II Initiatives Affecting Latino Communities

- 1956 The Council on Basic Education established to strengthen the academic curriculum of the nation
- 1957 Russians launch sputnik
- 1958 National Defense Education Act
- 1964 Civil Rights Act called for the orderly desegregation of schools; Economic Opportunity Act provides job training and employment for the poor
- 1965 Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the centerpiece of the War on Poverty, focuses on the educational needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds (meaning poverty)
- 1966 Coleman’s controversial Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey finds students’ academic performance most affected by their families’ social and economic status, their race, and their incoming school achievement
- 1967 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created to promote urban renewal, public housing
- 1968 Bilingual Education Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-247) or Title VII of ESEA acknowledges the needs of language minority children
- 1972 NIE created within the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, with the purpose of improving education by investigating how schools worked and other issues raised by Coleman’s study

- 1972 *Lau v. Nichols* case; schools must make accessible meaningful education for U.S.-born language minority children though appropriate instructional accommodations
- 1978 Legislative mandate for the first major substantive research agenda for bilingual education
- 1979 Department of Education created to improve primary and secondary education; Significant Bilingual Instructional Features Study funded for 3 years by NIE to identify instructional practices with language minority students and to investigate linguistic, cognitive, and social processes involved
- 1980 The Office of Educational Research and Development (OERI) created in U.S Department of Education, the primary source of research funding in the study of education for language minority children
- 1983 *A Nation at Risk* is published
- 1984 The Part C Research Committee disbanded
- 1984 Title VII reauthorized with expanded support for English immersion; an 8-year multimillion dollar study to compare the effectiveness of structure immersion, early exit bilingual, and late exit bilingual program models is funded.
- 1984 NIE reorganized out of existence as part of the reorganization of the Office of Educational research and Improvement (OERI) and the federal role in research shrinks to next to nothing
- 1987 Social Science Research Council forms committee for research on urban underclass
- 1992 Stanford Working Group advocates for the right of language minority children to an equal opportunity to learn; Title I and VII now make funds available for LMS
- 1994 Title VII moves away from remedial, compensatory model of bilingual education to enrichment and innovation; ESEA renamed *Improving American School's Act*, establishing 8 broad goals for education nationwide
Educational Research and Improvement Act
- 1995 Linda Darling-Hammond appoints Task Force on the Role and Future of Minorities
- 1996 AERA institute on alternative theoretical and epistemological approaches to research in minority communities

**NATIONAL LATINO/A EDUCATION RESEARCH
AND POLICY PROJECT (NLERAP) AND
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (NRC)
AGENDAS: A COMPARISON**

The Agenda-Setting Process

Best described as grassroots, bottom-up, democratic, and participatory, from the beginning NLERAP seeks aggressively to be open and inclusive, cross-disciplinary, and dialogic. Under the direction of Pedro Pedraza of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies of the City University of New York, and guided by a national advisory board that includes academic scholars, practitioners, and community activists, NLERAP goes to great lengths to draw on local knowledge and expertise, acknowledging the importance of perspective and point of view in educational inquiry (Green, 1994) but also the inseparability of theory from practice. Thus, NLERAP relies on local networks of informants to assure representation of the expertise and viewpoints of the entire spectrum of the education community—parents, students, teachers, community leaders, administrators, educationists, academics, government agencies, and foundations. In light of diversity of contexts, NLERAP also seeks representation of demographic trends, settlement patterns, and geography (urban-rural), holding nine distinct regional meetings in the United States and Puerto Rico over a two-year period. Through processes of dialogue and reflection across different roles and perspectives, issues and concerns are presented and discussed, local and national agreements on critical topics are derived, even when consensus is not always possible.

Gatherings in which disciplinary scholars, such as sociologists, anthropologists, economists, political scientists, and historians, engage with local practitioners, leadership, and representatives from philanthropic foundations in conversations about research do not always result in mutual understanding but always produce deep conversations about issues and concerns, and competing practical and theoretical lenses are negotiated. Even though all NLERAP participants share a similar commitment to understanding and addressing the educational experiences of Latino/a students, there are broad differences in backgrounds and experiences among them.

Possibly because of this, participants in NLERAP have come to recognize dialogue and reflection across difference as essential to

identification of critical topics of importance to local communities and nationally. NLERAP participants also come to appreciate these processes that are at the core of collaborative research and needed to understand and represent complex educational phenomena holistically, taking into account economic, sociopolitical, cultural, and historic factors.

As will become clear, other locally initiated agendas reviewed in this chapter follow, to a modified degree, a similar path. The approach, however, represents a sharp contrast to the way agendas are typically set, as is the case with the National Research Council's (NRC) 1997 Agenda for Language Minority Children (refer to Table 2.1). The council "was organized by the National Academy of Sciences in 1916 to associate the broad community of science and technology with the Academy's purpose of furthering knowledge and advising the federal government." The National Academy of Sciences is "a private, nonprofit, self-perpetuating society of distinguished scholars engaged in scientific and engineering research" (August & Hakuta, 1997). Although the report provides few details as to the agenda-setting process, we know participants were primarily academicians representing the discipline of psychology, and the number of publications and research awards determine scholarship and, therefore, "expertise." Once convened, the panel of "experts" meets in mostly private meetings to craft an agenda, basically from the top down, and with the freedoms the federal government accords to any of its advisory groups. Who is invited to sit at the table determines the character of the conversations, the viewpoints that are legitimized in the research, and consequently the knowledge base that we use to understand and address educational concerns.

Research Priorities

Not surprisingly, much of the knowledge base on Latino/a students has an unbalanced emphasis on the development of English language proficiency among newly arrived immigrant students, even though Latinos are a diverse population including recent and long-term Americans from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South America, and the Dominican Republic. This is the inevitable result of federally sponsored research and congressionally mandated studies of bilingual education giving priority to the acquisition of English language proficiency. Even so, the NRC agenda acknowledges the need for a comprehensive

TABLE 2.1

Comparisons Between NLERAP and the NRC Agenda

Name	Source	Procedures	Purpose	Research Priorities
Improving Schooling for Language Minority Children: A Research Agenda (1994–1997)	The Committee on Developing a Research Agenda on the Education of Limited English Proficient and Bilingual Learners was formed to conduct this NRC study.	A 12-member commission that met to set the agenda includes five Ph.D.s in psychology, three in education, and one sociolinguist. Nine are experts in language development, cognitive development, bilingual education, and immigrant education, and student demographics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Review knowledge base on linguistic, cognitive, and social processes in educating ELLs and Bilingual Learners; -Examine knowledge on effective programs to identify issues worthy of research -Evaluate research methodologies; -Recommend research priorities, the infrastructure, & the use of scientific evidence to inform policy and practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Content area learning, English literacy (in L2), intergroup relations, and social learning context; -Focus on young children, older students with little/no formal schooling; and former LEP's; English language acquisition among non-Latinos; -Effective programming, assessments, and teacher education for ELLs with disabilities; -Research questions of strong constituencies; -Build the nation's capacity for high-quality research
National Education Latino/a Research Agenda	An initiative of El Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños at Hunter College	A National Advisory Board of Representatives nine Regional Meetings held over 2-year period in geographically distinct areas of United States and Puerto Rico to identify context specific needs through dialogic processes engaging a broad range of stake holders, including community activists, teachers, parents, cross-disciplinary scholars.	<p>To give voice to Latino/a perspectives on school reform and the knowledge base needed to sustain positive social change</p>	<p>Areas of Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Standards and Assessment Practices *Teacher and Administrator Education and Professional Development *Sociopolitical and Historical Context of Latino/a Education *Arts in Education

framework that explores literacy acquisition and development for the range of Latino/a learners—from those who are new to English to those who have lived in multilingual, multidialectal communities all their lives—across the developmental continuum and in different contexts of use. Among the highest priority areas for future research in the NRC agenda are (a) content area learning, (b) second language literacy (c) intergroup relations, and (d) the social context of learning. Other areas of importance where there are existing research bases include assessment and teacher preparation.

Although there are overlaps between the NRC agenda and the NLERAP agenda, the highest priority concerns identified by NLERAP participants are (a) assessment, (b) high-stakes testing, (c) teacher preparation, and (d) the arts in education. It is worth reemphasizing these broad categories with corresponding concerns were identified through dialogic processes engaging between 200–300 participants representing a broad range of expertise, including lived experiences, across different regions of the country. No attempt was made to forge consensus, although the consensus that emerged naturally is impressive. African American and American Indian research agendas came out of similar collaborative processes unique to their populations and sociohistorical time of inception.

Theoretical Framework and Methodological Approaches

Most NLERAP participants agree knowledge is a social and historical product, facts are theory-laden, and the task of science is to invent theories to explain the real world (House, 1991). Consequently, although cross-disciplinary collaborations are complex, they are essential to generate robust knowledge of practical and theoretical significance for the schooling of students from marginalized communities. If it is true “no such tradition exists” as García and Otheguy (in Moll, 1992) claim, then NLERAP is constructing a framework to guide this type of research, adding to tasks having yet to be completed but not diminishing enthusiasm for morally imperative work. The project is establishing a new theoretical and epistemological tradition in the study of Latino/a students by Latinos in the context of Latino/a communities inclusive of economic sociopolitical, cultural, and historical factors that can be used interdisciplinarily, depending on research questions and modes

of inquiry. Members of the Research and Methods Working Committee of NLERAP have spelled out five principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR) that represent the methodological approach advocated by the group. Accordingly, PAR is an approach to carrying out research that can involve any one of a number of specific methods. PAR is not a method per se. Thus, principles of PAR have been applied to both qualitative and quantitative research that involve many different methods. Five suggested principles include:

- 1) Involve the group(s) most directly affected by the research in framing the research questions;
- 2) Develop skills of critical inquiry in the group of research participants who are working on the research project;
- 3) Share a draft of the written research results with the affected community before the research is published;
- 4) Negotiate reciprocity with the community most directly affected by the research;
- 5) Make sure that the work connects locally with the affected community and up from there, to either a district, statewide, or national level.

Sonia Nieto describes this kind of work as Latinos “cracking the code” (p. x) of their cultural-historical experience, knowledge, research, and appropriate implications shifting Latinos from the position of “being studied” from the outside, to the role of being firsthand researchers of their lives and experiences as experts from the inside (2001). An excellent example of a research approach in which Latinos collaborate in the study of their communities is the “funds of knowledge” approach as previously discussed (see, for example, Mercado [2000] in New York, Rueda [2004] in Los Angeles, Olmedo [1997] in Chicago). Through participation in this collaborative approach to research and development pre- and in-service teachers generate theoretical knowledge based on direct examination of culture as lived experience, which is then applied to transform classroom learning building on and extending the cultural resources for learning in students’ homes and communities. African American, American Indian, and Alaska Native researchers who work within their ethnic communities also find value in applying the cultural-historical approach when thinking about theoretical alternatives for research (Tippeconnic, 2000; Yazzie, 2000).

THE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION'S (AERA) COMMISSION ON RESEARCH IN BLACK EDUCATION (CORIBE)

Similar to the underlying premise for the betterment of Latino/a communities of NLERAP, the Commission on Research in Black Education (CORIBE) was designed to further the economic and educational survival and development of people of African descent. CORIBE, however, operates under the assumption the Black cultural knowledge base is neither divisive nor a "minority" issue. Like NLERAP, the Commission was designed to bring together a diverse group of visionary leaders (commissioners) and participants including researchers, graduate students, practitioners, policymakers, and community educators to voluntarily produce research and disseminate findings reflective of global educational issues affecting Black people. Unlike the NRC, CORIBE's purpose is not to advise the federal government as much as it is to advise the African American and perceived minority communities in the United States. CORIBE values research conducted by researchers of African American descent benefiting African American individuals and communities and seeks to identify additional resources, convening regularly to modify, adapt, and fine-tune the process.

The Agenda-Setting Process

Unique from NLERAP's bottom-up grassroots inception and NRC's nationally sanctioned Agenda for Language-Minority Children, CORIBE was initiated in 1999 by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the premier international professional organization responsible for advancing educational research and its practical applications. The commission was an outgrowth of the Research Focused on Black Education Special Interest Group (SIG) aspiration to establish a new AERA division on Black education. In a 2001 report, *Facing the New Millennium: A Transformative Research in Action Agenda and Black Education*, CORIBE frames their agenda-setting process, research priorities, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches of the organization's agenda (King, 2001).

CORIBE is comprised of an Elders Council providing commissioners with wisdom and history to guide the process of improving Black education issues and 13 commissioners appointed by AERA presidents.

Commission goals include: (1) enhancing the work of the AERA Research Focused on Black Education (SIG); (2) advocating for AERA responsiveness to Black education issues; (3) increasing funding opportunities for research to increase legitimacy of issues concerning Black education; (4) identifying, generating, and supporting interests in research in Black education across the organization; and (5) the close examination of international and different U.S. contexts of Black education.

Founding commissioners worked diligently at developing an aggressive agenda using a small grant provided by AERA. Central to the commission's agenda included the preparation of research papers for publication, the development of a working colloquium, the procurement of additional funds for the work, and the creation of an Internet presence.

Research Priorities

The newly formed commission developed a research agenda out of the central question: How can education research effectively improve the lives of Black people and advance human understanding? Unlike the NRC research agenda (1997) but as in the case of NLERAP, this question was to be answered holistically, across multiple levels and in various sociohistorical contexts. Based on this question, themes for research papers were identified in the initial planning group's proposal. The papers, including comments and responses from invited scholars representing Latino/a, White, and African American perspectives, were presented and discussed during the 2000 AERA annual meeting. At this meeting, elders and commissioners recommended developing a more transformative agenda prioritizing applied research inclusive of the entire Black community (churches, parents, advocacy organizations, artists, writers, actors, etc.) utilizing advanced technology in a variety of ways addressing Black education globally, including the importance of recognizing spirituality in Black education research. This evolving community-based grassroots approach was more similar to the current work of the NLERAP agenda.

At the AERA 2001 meeting CORIBE presented a multimedia symposium featuring 10 research-based "best practices" across academic disciplines serving learners in primary through post-secondary education in diverse cultural contexts. Cultural groups represented included Haitian, Native Hawaiian, South Carolina-Gullah, and urban and

rural communities nationwide. Interethnic relations among people of African descent emerged as a research area worthy of further review as noted by NLERAP researchers in acknowledging important differences between groups of Latinos living in the United States from specific countries (e.g., Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador) as well as generational and regional differences. CORIBE's Web site has several links to American Indian Web sites, corroborating the intraethnic dialogue suggested in the Latino/a research agenda and an interactive CD-ROM was developed and disseminated as a result of this work.

CORIBE accomplishments to date include the preparation of four research papers and six brief commentary research reports, a model research priority panel community discussion, various meetings, AERA symposium, a working colloquium, and an interactive Web site that includes, among other things, an online institute for graduate student research training, and an online database. Other multimedia resources include videotapes and audiotaped meetings. At this time, NLERAP is seeking funding to develop a comprehensive Web site to accommodate research activities, community outreach, inter- and intragroup interactions, as well as interactive member participation. By making good use of technology the NLERAP and CORIBE usher people of color directly into the "digital divide" challenging assumptions around the notion of access, while harnessing the power of technology to democratize the research process.

Theoretical Frameworks and Methodological Approaches

In 1997 Edmund Gordon reported on task force findings on the role and future of minorities in AERA. Gordon argues for AERA support for approaches to knowledge construction grounded in alternative realities. According to Gordon, issues concerning people of color are not important solely for minority scholars but for the entire association's (AERA) membership.

Gordon's report provides the framework for methodological and theoretical premises of CORIBE and in agreement with the NLERAP's position on the necessity for diverse scholars to construct more appropriate frameworks for conceptualizing research on youth of color being taught in U.S. mainstream educational systems. Linda Tillman (2002) further substantiates this work by suggesting scholars

of color “implement new strategies, begin new discourses, and create paradigms and models of educational research not only inclusive of culturally sensitive research approaches for African Americans but also have potential to change lives and communities in emancipatory ways” (p. 9).

CORIBE describes a culturally nurturing process-building methodology wherein graduate students and participating scholars are involved in opportunities for collaborative reflection, empirical inquiry imaginative in nature, and other collaborative action. The NLERAP research agenda describes this approach as being interdisciplinary as well as generated for Latinos by Latinos (Nieto, 2003). Of similar importance is the inclusion of African American studies, black intellectual traditions, and African or African American spirituality in research on or about Black people, generated by Black scholars. In this way, there are various contexts in which to think about Black education research and practice in which African culture and knowledge and wisdom of elders is respected and celebrated. Along this vein, for African American researchers, a form of cultural praxis with “Africanist principles” is embraced, epitomized by a metaphor likened to jazz, including the notion of embracing the paradox, coolness, and polycentrism (King, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2003). These tenets of CORIBE’s research agenda are in contrast to mainstream research in the way it democratizes the research process with values including reciprocity, mutuality, and truth-telling prevalent in African American culture (King & Mitchell, 1990/1995), akin to Nieto’s idea of Latinos being able to crack the code regarding ELLs in U.S. schools.

CORIBE’s research agenda thrives on a culture-systemic theoretical framework. NLERAP describes alternative epistemological, theoretical, and methodological frameworks inclusive of economic, sociopolitical, cultural, and historical factors employed interdisciplinarily depending on the scholar research questions or modes of inquiry. CORIBE describes this type of alternative appropriate for whichever group engages in the research and dissemination process. Transformative research in action is set apart from mainstream research in this manner. Research conducted for the people by the people will look very different than traditional research based on hegemony of the past. The focus on universal human interests, survival, and development make this research relevant for all of humanity (Gordon, 1997).

THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE PROJECT ON AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATORS AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND NATIVE ALASKAN EDUCATION RESEARCH AGENDA

American Indians and Alaska Natives have had to operate as collaborative, dialogue-based, consensus-building tribes and forced intertribal entities as long as they have been violated, oppressed, and marginalized by various European and U.S. governments. Latinos and African Americans in the United States have had their share of similar treatment, but not entirely on their homeland and not to the point of near extinction and invisibility. The Indian Nations at Risk Report (1991) describes 20 years of progress from the 1970s to the 1980s yet describes sustained lack of progress in the area of American Indian education. As in the case for Latino/a groups in the United States, early research with an American Indian or Alaska Native focus has come largely as a result of federal initiatives to improve conditions for AI/AN people to increase opportunities for mainstream success. Like NLERAP and CORIBE, the National Dialogue Project on American Indian Education (NDPAIE), the American Indian and Alaska Native Education Research Agenda (AIANERA), and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) 2003 *Critical Initiatives* each describe ways in which American Indian groups find common ground, identify core issues, and develop research priorities with and without the help of the federal government.

The Agenda-Setting Process

The National Dialogue Project ran from 1987 to 1988 and was initiated by collaboration between the American Indian Sciences and Education and the College Board's Equality Project. It involved 7 regional dialogue sessions representing 87 tribes, and 150 American Indian students, parents, tribal leaders, and educators. Much like the NLERAP and CORIBE in its evolution, the NDPAIE was determined to develop an agenda addressing the economic, social, and emotional problems of youth needing to function in what leaders in the project called "two worlds."

The development of the AIANERA, by contrast, is more similar to the National Research Council's agenda for language-minority children (1977), as it was assigned to the U.S. Department of Education's Office

of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and Office of Indian Education (OIE) in 1991 by Executive Order (13096). Working groups came from various U.S. departmental offices (e.g., Department of Education, Bureau of Indian Affairs), representatives of the Administration for Native Americans, the NCAI, and included ideas and comments from Native and non-Native educators and researchers.

In 2003, the NCAI published *Critical Issues*, which support the agenda described in the AIANERA, including public education and communication issues, the call for a research institute, a digital divide initiative, and an Indian Education focus on NCLB (2002) legislation. NCAI is an important entity because it is the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaskan Native organization in the United States with over 250 member tribes and thousands of United States members.

Research Priorities

Sovereignty and self-determination are at the forefront of all research efforts affecting American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) peoples (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002) and all efforts to stop the legacy of conventional colonizing research paradigms described by Smith (1999) are being pursued. Like research on students who are Latino/a and African American, educational research on students who are American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) needs to focus on individual student success rather than success as measured by criteria established by the majority culture (i.e., expected standardized high-stakes test results). Researchers also should respect tribal sovereignty as well as be sensitive to tribal differences inherent to indigenous people in the United States (AIAERA, 2001). Similarly, inter- as well as intragroup, linguistic, and geographical differences come to mind when considering research on students who are Latino/a and African American as well.

In direct response to these concerns, the NDPAIE identified nine concerns to inform research priorities (1987–1988). These concerns began with community-based research and included teacher reeducation and the inclusion of American Indian perspectives in courses, standardized tests as one indicator, legislative support for school reform, holistic curriculum, emphasis on high standards, and a merger of culture and education. Like the Latino/a and African American research agendas described, those involved in the dialogue seek to challenge

mainstream assumptions about their AI/AN children by conducting community-based research from the inside versus “empirically based” research from the outside.

More recently, the federally supported AIANERA describes a research agenda which comes out of the U.S. Department of Education under the direction of a Federal Interagency Task Force given the responsibility for developing a research agenda for AI/AN learners in response to the Executive Order 13096. The Executive Order which concerns American Indian and Alaska Native learners states the agenda will (a) establish baseline data on academic achievement and retention of students to monitor improvement, (b) evaluate promising practices, and (c) evaluate the role of language and culture in the development of educational strategies. Agenda language in this initiative is “progress” and “benchmark” laden in areas, and absent from the agenda is the notion of community-based work. The agenda does seem to reflect the idea of looking more closely at ties between language and culture, suggesting a closer look at the whole student.

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) as collaborator with the AIANERA, “serves to secure and preserve rights for AI/AN people;...to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of Indian people; to preserve tribal rights;...and to promote the common welfare of American Indians and Alaska Natives” (NCAI, 2003). As part of its charge, the NCAI looks to address gaps in information, education, and technology through dialogue-based partnerships and relationships. The NLERAP describes like dialogue sessions in the development of their research priorities. Through a proposed research institute to gather and assess data on conditions and trends for AI/AN, the group hopes to develop ideas and options for community-based approaches to federal American Indian policy and tribal governance. The group is in the process of developing a tribally driven “think-tank” for proactive strategy development. In addition, similar to CORIBE’s technology focus, NCAI has developed a Web site using an Indian-owned and operated Web development firm and endeavors to improve telecommunications and information technology by going after private and federal funds to support their technology efforts. The NCLB (2002) Act is also on NCAI’s agenda as members are committed to assisting American Indian tribes to implement the Act within Indian schools by way of a partnership with the National Indian Education Association.

According to the AIANERA, there are seminal issues needing resolution before carrying out and organizing the AI/AN research agenda.

These include definitional issues that should be resolved by AI/AN tribes; finding researchers with demonstrated knowledge of Native cultures; identifying quality research (design standards as well as researcher understanding of cultural context), and the ability to generalize findings. The prevalence of research on AI/AN conducted by non-Native researchers is mentioned as is the notion suggesting these cultures are less sophisticated than U.S. mainstream culture and the need to dismantle this underlying assumption. The AIANERA describes six priority research categories for the research agenda: educational outcomes; Native language and culture; teachers, schools, and resources; children with special needs; early educational needs; and standards and assessments to explore the AI/AN research agenda.

Theoretical Frameworks and Methodological Approaches

Comparable to calls made by Latino/a and African American community-based researchers about their participation in and production of ethnic research, AI/AN scholars describe a need for recognition and publication by more American Indian scholars and researchers (Swisher, 1996), while at the same time acknowledging respectable collaboration with non-Native researchers (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002). When AI/AN researchers engage in this work, it is necessary they examine their own histories and understandings of education, culture, and self-determination (Yazzie, 2000) in order to reconsider how cultural conflict resulting in knowledge negotiation and adaptation (Lipka, 1998) can lead to what Joel Spring calls deculturalization (2001). AI/AN scholars describe a kind of critical pedagogy and way of thinking about themselves in relation to their own education and research endeavors from a perspective that directly embraces critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In fact, Latino/a and African American scholars need to go through similar processes in order to reverse historical methods of education as colonization perpetuated through the culture of testing and standards-based mainstream knowledge present in U.S. schools today.

The absence of indigenous knowledge systems in "empirical" research is noted by AI/AN scholars and speaks volumes of the value of a group such as CORIBE's Elders Council. In order for AI/AN groups

to take ownership of knowledge and research to benefit their communities, they need to apply truths empirical to AI/AN for specific communities in specific time, space, and geographic location arising out of particular realities of "indigeneity." The "funds of knowledge" approach is embraced by Latino/a, African American, and AI/AN inquiry communities alike as a common yet specific, inclusive yet particular, theoretical framework with which to view the "repositories of knowledge residing in their communities frequently overlooked in Western science and school curriculum" (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2002, p. 3).

AI/AN research should be based on cultural strengths and integrity if sustainability is to be achieved (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997). Both NLERAP and CORIBE participants echo these concerns related to building on solid cultural foundations appropriate for their students as a means to authenticate research results. Tribal influence in every aspect of research development, design, and methodology is crucial to the applicability of results and sound conclusions (Tippencoonic, 2002). Latinos and African Americans have come to similar conclusions based on theoretical frameworks developed by NLERAP and CORIBE. All groups reject the notion of one truth or one way of conducting research based on the perpetuation of objects unity by mainstream research trends. Lomawaima (2000) describes a shift in power or mental models in Indian country where tribes are currently exercising more control, autonomy, and responsibility in research resulting in an anticipated move to Indian scholars giving back to their tribal communities (Swisher & Tippencoonic, 1999). Latino/a and African American communities have exercised this kind of autonomy in the past, but mostly in isolation, and mostly at the whim of federal funding and governmental legislative trends. Punitive legislation like the NCLB Act (2002) can act as a catalyst for diverse researchers to reexamine priorities, "reframe" research areas, and create powerful shifts in knowledge and practice in the interest of all children of color.

COMMON GROUND

Although each Latino/a, African American, and American Indian/Alaska Native agenda reviewed in this chapter represents independent initiatives, convergence among them is striking (refer to Table 2.2). Despite differences, convergence is strong in terms of the following.

TABLE 2.2
Community-Initiated Research Agendas

<i>Name</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Procedures</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Research Priorities</i>
National Dialogue Project on American Indian Education (1987–1988)	The American Indian Sciences & Education Society & The College Board's Equality Project	Seven regional dialogues representing 87 tribes and 150 American Indian students, parents, tribal leaders, and educators	Develop an agenda to address the economic, social, and emotional problems of youth who need to function in two worlds; call to reorient basic competencies	Major concerns: e.g., community-based research; Teacher reeducation and the inclusion of Indian perspectives in courses; standardized tests as only one indicator; legislative support for school reform; holistic curriculum; emphasis on high standards and merger of culture and education.
National Education Latino/a Research Agenda	An initiative of El Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños at Hunter College	A National Advisory Board of Representatives nine Regional Meetings held over 2-year period in geographically distinct areas of US and PR identify context specific needs through dialogic processes engaging hundreds of stake holders, including community activists, teachers, parents, cross-disciplinary scholars,	To give voice to Latino/a perspectives on school reform and the knowledge base needed to sustain positive social change	Areas of Research: *Standards and Assessment Practices *Teacher and Administrator Education and Professional Development *Sociopolitical and Historical Context of Latino/a Education *Arts in Education

<i>Name</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Procedures</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Research Priorities</i>
A Transformative Research and Action Agenda in Black Education (1999–2001)	The AERA Commission on Research in Black Education (CORIBE) was established in 1999 to stimulate research (including funding for research), its dissemination and policy-making to improve education for and about people of African ancestry.	Elders council (6), commissioners (13), scholars (25); planning team (8). Work plan to address education holistically; commission four state-of-the-art papers; -Working colloquium analyzes gaps in knowledge and conceptual and analytical research tools Web site as research and dissemination tool	Crisis in black education; how research can improve the lives of Black people and advance human understanding; -Reorient research thru culturally responsive analytical tools and conceptual frameworks and international perspectives -Identify culturally nurturing best practices -Computer-based digital technologies for community development	-Well-funded large and small-scale applied research on culture as an asset in student-teacher learning and development; -Community impact -The relationship between alienation and achievement -Relationship between cognition and political-economic goals; between coping and cognition -Dynamics between funds of knowledge and activity structures across contexts and knowledge domains -Models of in-service teacher development that promote conceptual shifts

Self-Help and Self-Determination

There is a long history of struggle predating the civil rights movement to act in the best interest of our children and our communities. We agree with Smith (1999) that research is a significant site of struggle and agency. Research is at the service of improving the quality of life and education in local communities. It is a way of taking back or claiming ownership to the right to determine what is in the best interest of our communities.

Creating a Broad-Based Participatory Process

We are community-oriented people and collective work comes naturally. Broad-based participation in the knowledge construction process democratizes the research process, and enables us to examine and interrogate how we make sense of social phenomena, to determine what counts as quality research and to advance human understanding in ways likely to make a difference in our communities. However, there are many impediments to building and sustaining communities across professional, social, and ideological boundaries, even among people who have a shared vision. The struggle to find ways to address or mitigate the effects of these challenges is ongoing, but we “embrace the conflict” and tensions that arise because of benefits derived from coming together.

The Centrality of Culture and Language

Culture is our lived experience, tradition, and values that nurture and sustain us. Culture speaks in honoring the knowledge and wisdom of our elders; in the expression of self through words, music, artistic expression, and movement; in the importance of spirituality in our lives; and in the values of mutuality and reciprocity. Culture is central to how we conduct research and it is central to how our children learn. Therefore, culture is an asset both in research and education.

The Influence of Context

Regarding local contexts, independent schools, alternative public schools, and community-based organizations are examples of three different educational contexts that have met success in educating

Latino/a, African-American, and American Indian students. Studies need to be conducted describing the influence and impact of these learning contexts on healthy human development.

However, we are mindful that all activities are embedded socio-political, cultural, historical, or sociohistorical contexts, webs of power relations constraining or facilitating possibilities for action. Each research agenda reviewed described ways in which contexts affect research and implications.

Holistic Education

Latino/a, African American, American Indian, or Alaska Native children, and all youth of color “come to school with a wide variety of needs, and therefore should be treated as whole people rather than detached receptacles for academic knowledge” (Sanacore, 2001). People who come from indigenous cultures see their children in their entire team as ready and able, not broken or deficient, or at risk in any way.

New Epistemological Frameworks

As expressed to each research agenda, educational research in Latino/a/minority communities requires the development of alternative theoretical frameworks powerful enough to examine and analyze complex social and educational phenomena from cross-disciplinary perspectives. For example, oppression has been framed as we-they but seldom as we-we. Furthermore, the design of contrastive case studies are needed to examine the differential experiences of varied language and racial minorities so as to better understand the diverse character of our American educational heritage, including inter- and intraethnic differences and similarities among Latino/a, African American, American Indian, or Alaska Native people in the United States, resulting from geographic, linguistic, and cultural factors.

Economic Empowerment and Community Development

Poverty is the root cause of many of the social and educational problems impeding healthy human development in formal learning contexts.

Our concern is not with increasing scores on standardized tests; it is about economic empowerment for historically marginalized communities. Although people of color are often made to compete for limited resources provided by such educational acts as the ESEA of 1965, Goals 2000, and the NCLB (2002), research agendas previewed in this chapter suggest a collective rise above this polarizing and overall destructive mental model that does not serve us well.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The answer to why we need another research agenda does not simply come from an examination of the content of different agendas. It comes from understanding the bigger picture. As Popkewitz and other critical theorists suggest, research on the education of Latinos is embedded in a web of power relations which needs to be understood (1992). We need to use empirical evidence to unmask how power relations shape discourse and research on the education of Latinos, African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives in ways that speak to the interests of the American public.

Furthermore, as Peter Senge suggests, we need to use systemic thinking to address complex problems and issues (1990). We also need to understand that in a complex system there is no one source of power. Collectively, we are the system and we need to act with this awareness. In this manner, we can harness the strength that comes from collective action to transform who we are, to transform education, and the conditions of our communities.

This is precisely what the National Latino/a Education Research Agenda Project is all about—it is about forming alliances with a broad base of stakeholders and sponsoring multidisciplinary, longitudinal action research projects addressing in a more strategic and holistic manner the gravest concerns of our communities. Collaborative action is what CORIBE describes and models in its transformative research practice and call for action of Black people on a global scale, transcending language and culture, and in calling for a more inclusive research agenda. Additionally, research agendas for underrepresented groups need to include collaborative endeavors with individuals who come from other groups including the value of work from allegiances with White allies. To the extent this chapter demonstrates commonalities, we are in a better position to form alliances to continue to and further build the strong base of support merited by this endeavor.

Historically, coalitions of African Americans, American Indians, Chicanos, and other disenfranchised groups successfully struggled in the civil rights movement to attain valued social, economic, and educational goals. Present conditions in our communities call for the same unity of purpose and action. Our common ground compels us to connect to each other, to learn from each other, and to engage in collaborative research projects allowing us to study educational issues and concerns with greater depth and rigor in a cost-efficient manner. Much is already known about "best practices," even though this information has been marginalized. Opportunities for ethnic groups to develop competence, skill, and proficiency in inter-/intraethnic dialogue need to be valued, created, sought after, and maximized.

IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides a comparative perspective on research in Latino/a communities, past, present, and future from divergent viewpoints and voices. It is evident there is a great deal of common ground in what is being said, but there are differences in the epistemologies framing each agenda, theoretical perspectives, and methodological procedures guiding the framing of the agendas depending on unique characteristics of each agenda reviewed. One thing is for certain: Scholars of color and those interested in social justice and equity need to challenge several mainstream assumptions about our youth and schools in order to impact action, social justice, and equity sooner rather than later. Educationally based assumptions needing challenge include: (1) the United States as a meritocratic system; (2) the notion racism has been "solved"; (3) educational tracking as neutral; and (4) the purpose of schooling as assimilation (Cochran-Smith, 2003).

Research quality is also an issue wherein agendas reviewed express concern for improving the quality of research. As mentioned earlier, one of the factors affecting research quality is the lack of funding. Another is research crossing class, ethnic, and racial boundaries requires a multidisciplinary perspective, demanding skills and expertise exceeding preparation provided in graduate and postgraduate studies. Moreover, educational research within minority and working-class communities in the United States has, for the most part, become the domain of an ethnically diverse group of researchers, many who have entered educational research through what are considered nontraditional avenues. For example, many are former teachers and school administrators who bring valuable insights based on firsthand

knowledge of schools, classrooms, and communities, but who have had relatively fewer opportunities to participate as members of research communities.

This contribution suggests the need for collaborative studies engaging senior scholars who may have less knowledge of local contexts working side by side with junior colleagues who bring other types of expertise. It also demonstrates possibilities and sets an example for inter- and interethnic collaboration. Successful collaborative work notwithstanding, fund-raising to support these efforts is critical. Basic and applied research needs to be funded, preferably by foundations, professional organizations, and universities who are willing to commit to longitudinal research for purposes of generating new knowledge in high-priority local communities.

Underrepresented groups in the United States need to recognize when times are crucial for discourse and single-mindedness on behalf of children of color in school systems. However, because research is complex, costly, and time-consuming, efforts to address the needs of diverse learners also may have to be made on moral and ethical grounds, not simply on the basis of data-driven information and processes. It is up to scholars and researchers of color to collectively identify possibilities for Latino/a, African American, American Indian, and Alaska Native students, and other educationally marginalized children in our country. When scholars and researchers of color and like-minded allies come together around these issues, it will be like waking a sleeping giant in U.S. school system reform.

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