*Aquí estoy*… Do you hear my voice?

An Action Ethnography Study of Parental Involvement at a Suburban Elementary School

1. Spanish-speaking immigrant parents that have been in the USA three years or less, will be interviewed on a volunteer basis. For purposes of comparison immigrant parents who are involved and those who are only marginally involved in school activities will be included on a volunteer basis via group interviews (focus group or small group) or individually. School staff recommended by the campus administrator will also be interviewed for comparison purposes. Both campus administrators, principal and assistant principal, will be interviewed and participate in focus group discussions. Small group interviews will include 3 to four participants and larger focus groups will include 10 to 15 people. I am focusing on recently arrived Spanish speaking immigrant parents because this is a population that is representative of the increasing numbers of English language learners from countries such as Mexico and Central America where Spanish is the dominant language.

2. Information regarding participation in the study will be shared via school newsletters and at public meetings at the school where the study will take place. I will also ask school staff to recommend participants who might be willing to participate. I also expect parents will utilize existing networking systems to spread the request for voluntary participation. Written consent forms have been developed and will be provided to all possible volunteers prior to their participation in the study. Consent forms are written in both English and Spanish. The primary researcher is fluent in both languages and therefore able to communicate and answer questions regarding participation in either of the two languages required by potential volunteers. All persons agreeing to participate will sign a consent form explaining the study and their participation in said study.

3. This study takes a critical approach. Critical Theory, for the purposes of this study, is used in a broadly developed meaning grounded in a philosophy and history of empowerment. This action ethnographic case study focuses on the examination of the points of view of Hispanic immigrant parents. For the purposes of this study I will be using the traditional tools of ethnographic field-work. Data will be collected primarily via focus groups, some informal interviews, some semi-structured interviews, field notes, audio tapes, and video tapes. Analysis will take place within a case study approach using transcripted tapes, field note information, and results from examination of artifacts. The approach will generate cogent themes. Triangulation will occur naturally due to variety of data sources and rigorous analysis and identification of themes. Questionnaires will guide the more formal interviews and will be used to prompt focus groups discussions.

4. Participation in this particular study does not have any obvious or foreseeable risks—physical, psychological, social, legal or other. No more than minimal risk exists when the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in this research are not greater (in and of themselves) than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during performance of routine physical or psychological tasks.

5. Participants identities will be protected and never be referenced in the research by their real names. They will be identified according to a code to which only the researcher will be privy. All interviews and transcripts will be destroyed within the time requirements established at Texas State University.

6. From a critical theory perspective, this study takes an approach of opening doors for recent immigrant Latino parents struggling to identify their presence within the American public school system. Additionally, it is expected that this study will launch a platform for advocacy and empowerment specifically for Latino immigrant parents at this school and disconnected Latino parents in general. The ultimate goal for this study is that a better informed relationship between parents and schools will result in the increased academic achievement of ELLs at the school site.

7. No compensation in any form is provided to participants in this study.

8. As previously stated there are no risks to participants of this study therefore only benefits could come to participants who possibly begin to build more productive relationships with the school personnel who teach their children at the research site.

9. An elementary school in a small but growing suburban school district in central Texas will be the research site for this study. District officials have approved the study at a designated site.

10. This study is intended to bring to light a clearer understanding of parental involvement from the perspective of parents who are not usually viewed as participants in their children’s education. Dr. Ann Brooks is my dissertation chair.

11. Evidence of approval by dissertation committee has been submitted.

12. This study has not been reviewed/approved by any other IRB.

13. Individuals having access to this study will include members of my dissertation committee, Ann Brooks, Sarah Nelson, Patricia Guerra, and Charise Pimentel. The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and director of academic achievement in the district where the research site is located will also have access to the completed dissertation.