



# Opportunities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools: The Multicultural Community

Presenter:

Elizabeth Vera, Ph.D.

School of Education

*Loyola University Chicago*



# **Chicagoland Partners For English Language Learners (CPELL)**

## **Loyola University Chicago**

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**School of Education · Loyola University Chicago · 820 N. Michigan  
Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611**

**Phone:312.915.6318 · E-mail: [cpell@luc.edu](mailto:cpell@luc.edu)**

- What is different about education today than it was when you were in school?
- What educational advantages and disadvantages exist today in comparison to past generations?



- More than 14 Million American school children are English Language Learners.
- One in five children ages 5-17 are from immigrant families.
- Most of these children, (79%) were born in the United States.



- While approximately 40% come from Mexico, countries such as China, Korea, India, Russia, constitute the home countries of between 5-10% of the ELL population.





## ■ Immigration in the year 1900

- In 1900, 97% of immigrants had origins in Europe or Canada.
- In 1900, immigrating meant cutting ties with your homeland and extended family.
- In 1900, assimilating into “American” culture resulted in people’s names being changed, native languages being lost.



# Immigration in 2000

Staying connected with homeland and extended family is commonplace (and greatly facilitated via technology).

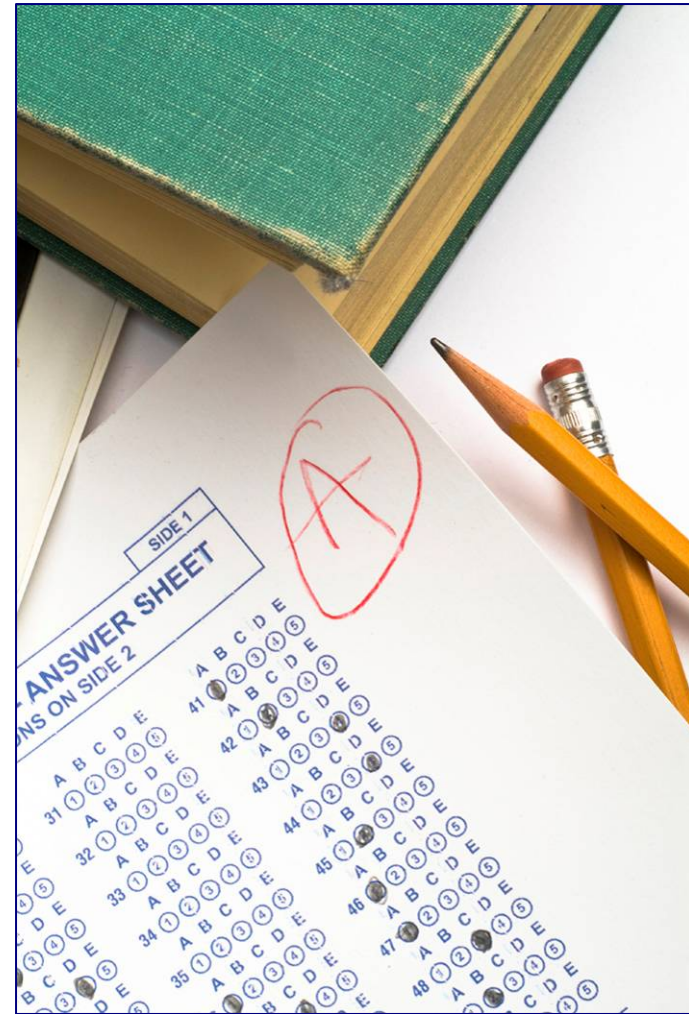
Maintaining heritage is promoted and much easier for many families.



***In heterogeneous schools, positive cultural identity is strongly tied to social and emotional learning, academic performance, and confidence.***



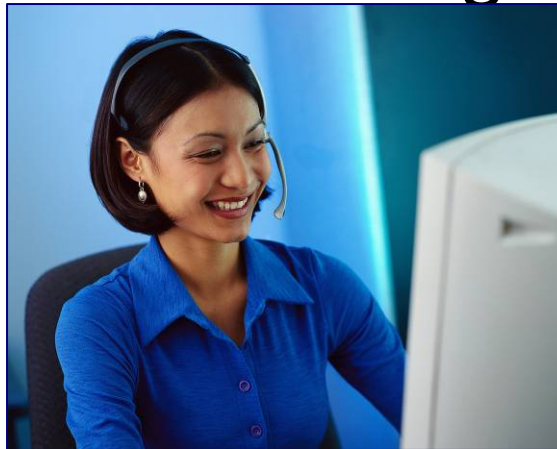
- A large number of research studies show very clearly that bilingualism can increase children's language abilities and help their progress in school.



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- What does it mean to be a multicultural school community?

## PLURALISM VS. MULTICULTURALISM

- Children who can read/write/speak two languages have a major advantage not just in school but also in finding jobs after school.
- Children who form relationships with peers from different cultures are better prepared for professions in a global society.



- As the United States becomes even more culturally diverse, attending a multicultural school is going to be a very big advantage for your child when he/she becomes an adult.




- What are the challenges to integrating school communities?



- Cross-Cultural differences in educational systems
- Different expectations regarding parental involvement (intrusivity as disrespect)
- Economic differences
- Language barriers
- Discrimination experiences




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- Connections are made through empathy, remembering the struggles of our own ancestors.
  - Culture is something we all have and we all want to feel pride about our heritage.


# ■ Making our Parent Communities look more like our classrooms:

- Expanding knowledge of diverse cultures
- Outreach
- Empowerment
- Flexibility
- The problem with “business as usual”





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- Educating ourselves about diverse cultures: Culture Grams
  - URL: <http://online.culturegrams.com>  
Login ID: cpellremote  
Password: library

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- Outreach: If you build it, will they come?
  - Cultural Liaisons
  - Educating new members about the role and function of PTOs.



## Empowerment:

Communicating that new perspectives matter.

Soliciting participation from new members.

Creating small group opportunities to reduce anxiety.


Formal acknowledgement of appreciation.

Inviting new members to recruit additional voices.



## ■ Flexibility

- offering parent events at convenient times
- personal invitations
- providing translators
- child care
- food
- gifts/incentives

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- Business as Usual typically works best for those who already participate.
  - Trying new approaches communicates a sincerity in reaching out to new participants.

## ■ Creating Multicultural Communities:

- Short-term goals
- Long-term goals
- Assigning leadership roles
- Accountability





**The End  
Thanks for coming!**

**The CPELL Team**

