
Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Spaces for Latinx & Indigenous Mesoamerican Students

September 11, 2025

Be the Light, Be of Service, Be the Solution



Lydia Acosta Stephens

Parent of they/them/Kiddo

Executive Director, Multilingual Multicultural Education Department

Purpose:

- Deepen our understanding of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP)
- Make connections to the lived experiences of Latinx and Indigenous educators and students
- Reflect on how to support schools by honoring their resilience

Outcomes



Define Latinx within different spheres of existence



Develop critical learning about Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP)

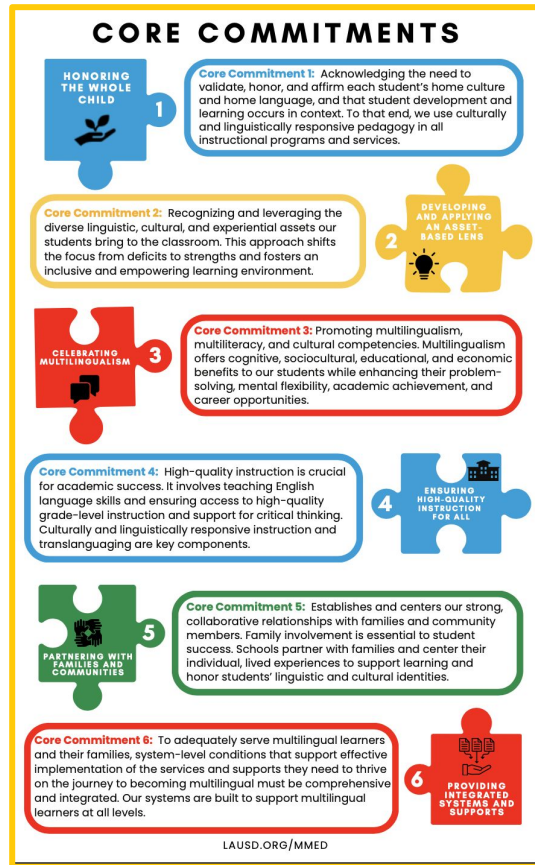


Deepen the understanding of CLRP by centering educator and student experiences



Discuss how to support schools and educators in further building resilience, empowerment and honoring identities

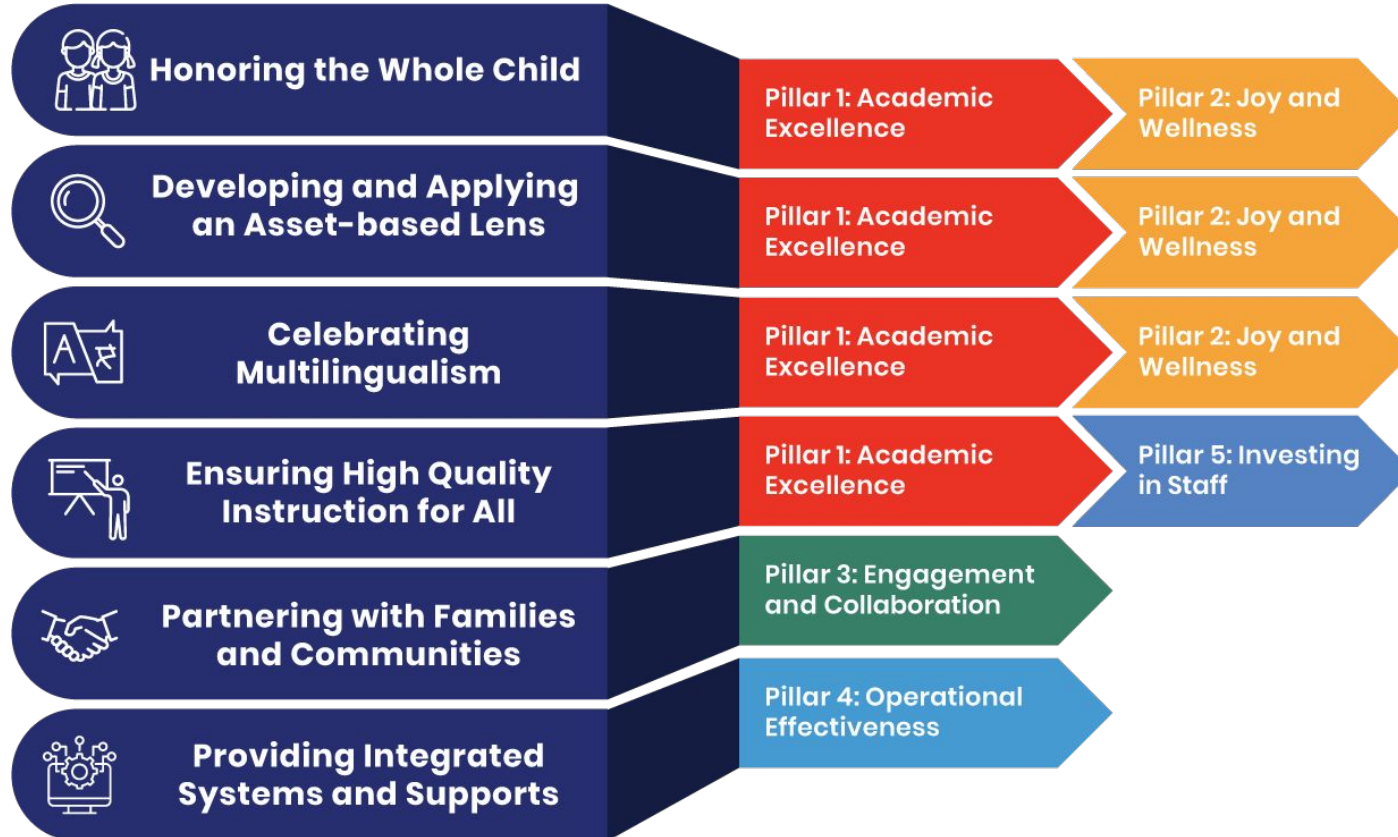
MMED Core Commitments



2025 Multilingual Multicultural Master plan

Core Commitments

Connection to LAUSD Pillars



Different Spheres of Existence

A Mosaic, Not a Monolith



Nepantla: A Nahuatl word that means “in-between” or “in the middle”. Chicana philosopher Gloria Anzaldúa used the concept to refer to **threshold regions between different spheres of existence**.

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, G. Anzaldúa

lausd.org/mmed

Diverse Indigenous Mesoamerican Communities



Purepecha from Mexico



Maya Ixil - Guatemala



Purepecha from Mexico



Quechua from Ecuador



Muisca People of Colombia



Zapotecos from Mexico



Maya K'iche' - Guatemala



Taino People of Puerto Rico



Mixtecos from Mexico



Maya Q'anjob'al - Guatemala



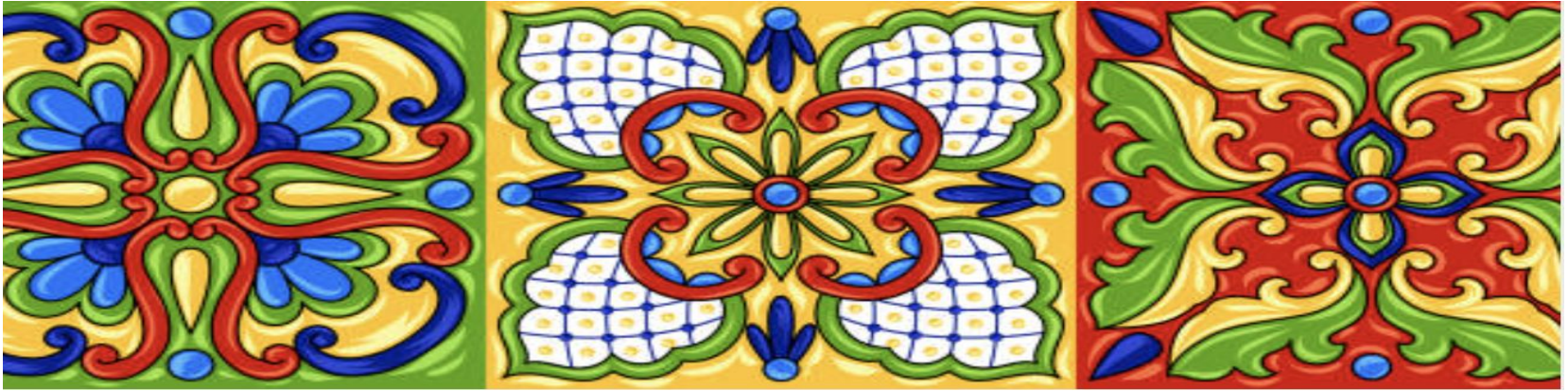
Yaqui from Mexico



Maya Mam - Guatemala

The Mosaic

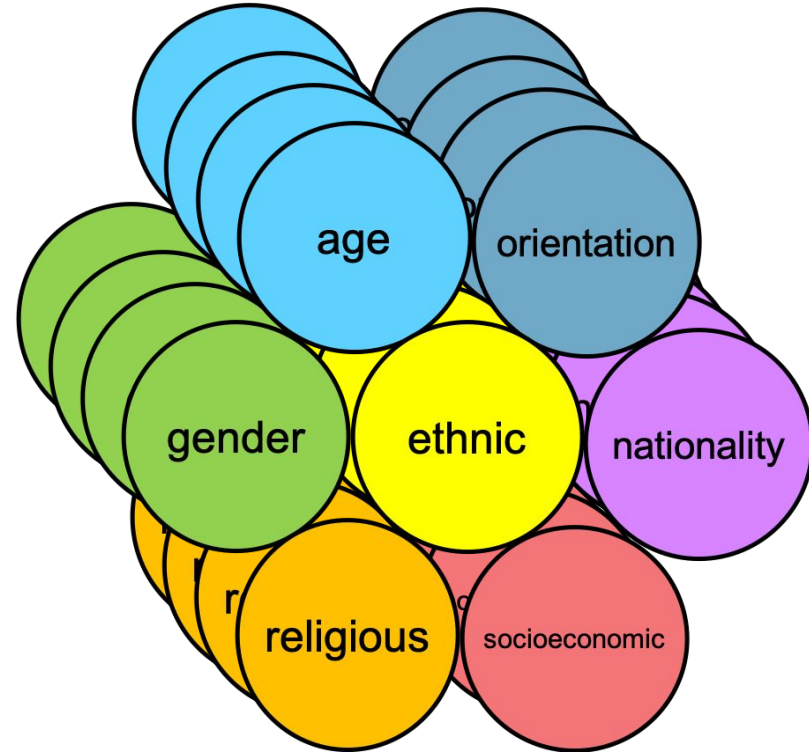
A beautifully complex collection of the lived experiences of our Latinx community that critically disrupts traditional and static views of Latinx ethnic, cultural, geopolitical, linguistic, and immigration realities.



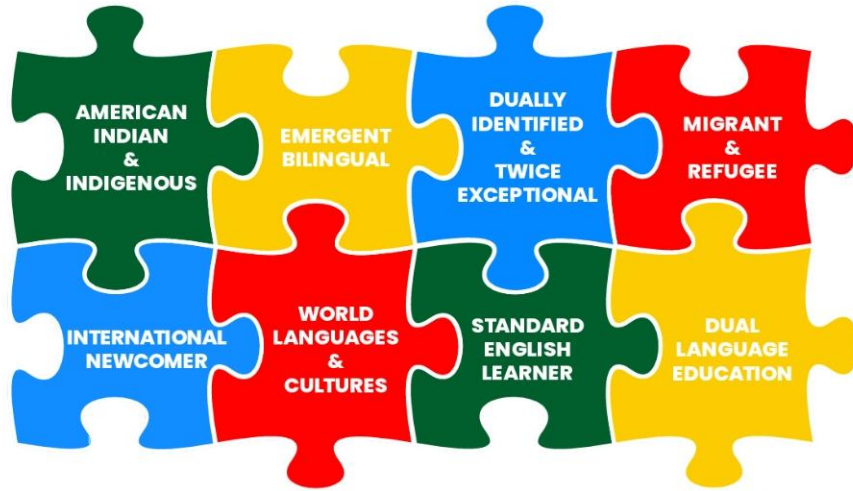
Rings of Culture

*“An understanding of the Rings of Culture is directly linked to the process of **validating, affirming, building, and bridging**, especially as it applies to ethnocultural identity. The Rings of Culture allow educators to look broadly at cultural behaviors to see students as multi-dimensional and avoid pigeonholing.”*

(Hollie 2023)




Indigenous Mesoamerican Populations



Indigenous multilingual learners live in multiple spaces.

American Indian/Alaska Native and Indigenous Family Questionnaire

 **Los Angeles Unified School District**
American Indian/Alaska Native and Indigenous Family Questionnaire
For parents of American Indian/Alaska Native and Indigenous students

Please help us identify your child by completing this voluntary questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify American Indian/Alaska Native and Indigenous students in the district to better serve their needs. *Complete this questionnaire if you identify yourself or your child as American Indian/Alaska Native or are from an Indigenous Community including but not limited to Mexico, Central or South America.*

Examples of Tribal or Community affiliations include but are not limited to: Tongva, Tataviam, Navajo (Diné), Zapotec, Maya, Lenca, K'iche', First Nations, etc.

Please provide the following information:

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____

What is the best time to call you? ☐ 8am-12pm ☐ 12pm-6pm ☐ 6pm-8pm

Student's name: _____ Birthdate: _____
School Name: _____ Grade: _____

My child is (check any that apply):

☐ **Enrolled** and a member of a federally or state recognized tribe, or the child or grandchild of a member of a federally or state recognized tribe. Complete the federal ED 506 Form included in the enrollment packet or visit the Title VI website to complete the ED 506 Form to ensure we provide Title VI services to eligible students.
<https://www.lausd.org/Page/18529>

☐ **Not Enrolled** but from a Native American/American Indian Tribe or Community
• Affiliation(s) _____

☐ **Indigenous from the Regions of Mexico, Central, or South America (including but not limited to)**
• Country: _____
• Indigenous Community, Pueblo, or Aldea _____

☐ **N/A- Not applicable**

Do you speak an American Indian/Alaska Native or Indigenous language in the home?
☐ Yes ☐ No
If you answered yes, which language(s)? _____

For information, call the Los Angeles Unified School District, Title VI American Indian/Alaska Native and Indigenous Education Office at 213-241-5582

****TO SCHOOL STAFF****
Please return this survey to the Multilingual Multicultural Education Department, Attn: Title VI American Indian/Alaska Native and Indigenous Education Program, Beaudry Building, 25th floor, to ensure student identification for eligible families. Please call 213-241-5582 for more information.

Modified 07/09/2024

- The *American Indian/Alaska Native and Indigenous Family Questionnaire* was developed to accurately identify students and families who are Indigenous to the Americas and abroad
- Improve the identification of Indigenous students who come from predominantly Spanish-speaking countries and whose home language may not be Spanish
- All newly enrolled and returning students to LAUSD should complete the form at the time of enrollment

Family Questionnaire: Preliminary Information

Indigenous Community/Tribe	Location
Zapotec, Mixe, Chinantec	Oaxaca, Mexico
Mixtec	Oaxaca and Puebla, Mexico
Otomi	Central Mexico, Queretaro, and Puebla, Mexico
Totonac	Veracruz and Puebla, Mexico
Purepecha	Michoacan, Mexico
Maya Ixil	Municipalities located in the <i>Quiché</i> department of Guatemala
Maya Mam and Maya Q'anjob'al	Departments of <i>Huehuetenango</i> , Guatemala and Chiapas, México
Maya K'iche'	Central Highlands of Guatemala

Indigenous Community/Tribe	Location
Cherokee and Shoshone	United States
Quechua	Ecuador
Chechen	Caucasus Mountains in Russia
Taino	Puerto Rico
Fernandeño Tataviam	Simi, San Fernando, Santa Clarita, and Antelope Valleys
Gabrieleño Tongva	L.A. Basin, Channel Islands
Yaqui and Apache	Sonora, Mexico
Muisca	Colombia

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Spaces for Multilingual Learners

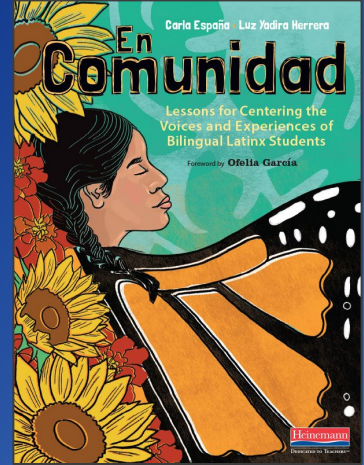
Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy

The **validation and affirmation** of the home culture and home language for the purposes of **building and bridging** the students to success in the culture of academia and mainstream society.

Source: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching by Sharroky Hollie, 2018

Translanguaging is...

- ...when a multilingual person's **full linguistic repertoire** is used and honored, instead of privileging a single language.



**We naturally
communicate using
the totality of our
linguistic resources.**

**Home
Family School
Friends Community
Neighbors Students
Colleagues**

Source: Adapted from *En Comunidad*, España and Herrera, 2020

Language is More than Just Language...



Language

Culture

Ancestry

Land

Heritage

Identity

Ethnicity

History

Family Roots



Reflect independently: What does language mean to you?

Leveraging Cultural and Linguistic Wealth

Translanguaging and Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy (CLRP) intersect deeply, as they both aim to value and leverage students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds to enhance learning.

Both translanguaging and CLRP honor the cultural and linguistic richness found in students' everyday lives (funds of knowledge).

CLRP and Translanguaging

- Personalize learning to student experience
- Support cross-language learning
- Resist dominant, monolingual, assimilationist models
- Use cultural knowledge in teaching
- Validate multilingual expression
- Affirm cultural and linguistic identity



Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Strategies


District-Wide Professional Development Module



Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Spaces for Multilingual Learners


Date
School
Facilitator





Los Angeles Unified School District
Multilingual Multicultural Education Department

TRANSLANGUAGING
THE GENIUS OF THE MULTILINGUAL BRAIN




What is Translanguaging?

Translanguaging describes the fluid language practices of multilingual people and communities, grounded in the internal perspective and linguistic and cultural identity of the speaker. Translanguaging is communicating with others through **one holistic linguistic repertoire**, without a separation of languages.

One holistic linguistic repertoire

Fluid
linguaging to
communicate
and connect



Dynamic use of
language in
everyday life, at
home, school,
and community

Translanguaging is when a multilingual person's full linguistic repertoire is used and honored, instead of privileging a single language.

Concept #1: Translanguaging Stance

A translanguaging **stance** can be described using the concept of "together." This together stance is informed by three beliefs:

Home and Community Language & Culture

Student's language practices and cultural understanding encompass those they bring from home and communities.

Family Funds of Knowledge

Funds of Knowledge
Students' families and communities are valuable sources of knowledge.

Classrooms as Democratic Spaces


Classroom as Democratic Spaces
The classroom is a democratic space where teachers and students juntos/together co-create knowledge.



Revised 7/9/24 Source: The Translanguaging Classroom (Leveraging Student Bilingualism for Learning by Ofelia Garcia, Susana Ibanez Johnson, Kate Seltzer P-2 [lausd.net](https://www.lausd.net))

Los Angeles Unified School District
Multilingual Multicultural Education Department

Key Instructional Access Strategies
Culturally & Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy
Cooperative and Communal Learning Environments
Learning Supports for Multilingual & Multicultural Learners

Instructional Strategies	Classroom Observables	CLR Application & Digital Tools
<p>Cooperative and Communal Learning Environments: supportive and motivating environments that promote language acquisition by providing comprehensible input in developmentally appropriate ways. Working collaboratively in small groups with individually assigned roles to achieve an instructional goal, students learn faster and more efficiently with increased time on tasks, have greater retention, and feel more positive about the learning experience.</p> 	<p>Creating a Collaborative and Affirming Learning Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows SELs, ELs, RFEPs, and SWDs to maximize the amount of time available for hearing and using language in low-risk cooperative learning environments Introduces the concept of the classroom as a family structure and builds on this concept in ways that affirm high achievement and academic success as an objective for all students Encourages students to routinely support each other in learning activities Provides opportunities for students to interact with their peers to brainstorm, explain, question, disagree, persuade, and problem-solve Provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding of academic concepts in varied formats that reflect their preferred learning styles and strengths Integrates group learning tasks, discussions, and presentations into daily instruction Emphasizes small group activities to encourage language development and sharing of ideas Arranges classroom seating to reflect regular collaborative learning opportunities Co-creates classroom norms and other procedures with students 	<p>Application to 5 Areas of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) Pedagogy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsive Environment: Include student and teacher created CLR learning posters in classroom environment; regularly celebrate diverse cultures with CLR bulletin boards Responsive Management: Utilize protocols for collaboration Responsive Language: Develop and communicate clear language objectives that are visible to students <p>CLR Instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect to students' Rings of Culture (Hollie 2017) Validate, Affirm, Build and Bridge (Hollie 2017) Information Processing: Ignite, Chunk, Chew and Review for all areas (Hammond 2014) <p>Blended Learning Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a variety of online applications to provide discussion and collaboration opportunities Share CLR resources on Learning Management Systems

Adapted from *Academic Language Mastery: Culture in Context* by Norma LeMoine and Iannina Soto

September 2024 lausd.org/imm

Resources for Supporting Indigenous Multilingual Learners



lausd.org/mmed

<https://bit.ly/ResourcesSupportingIndigenousMLL>

- Interactive slide deck that has compiled resources to support Indigenous Multilingual Learners, including:
 - ***Strengthening Indigenous Cultural Identity in the Classroom***
 - ***Building Trust and Meaningful Engagement with Indigenous Families***
 - ***Indigenous International Newcomer Resources***

Resources for the following Indigenous cultural backgrounds

- **Zapotec**
- **Mixtec**
- **Mayan K'iche'**

This resource is continuously updated

How can we support schools and educators in *every* classroom to engage real world themes and realities?

(building resilience, identity, and empowerment)

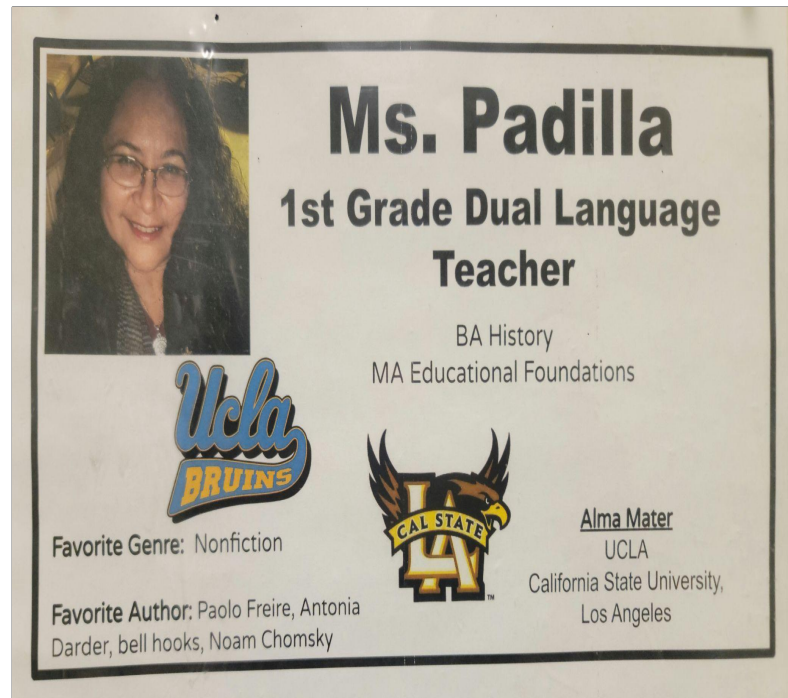
Centering Educator and Student Voices

Josefina Padilla 1st Grade Teacher Hooper Ave. ES

Principal: Dr. Lindsay Burt

Indigenous Educator in LAUSD

- Educator for 32 years LAUSD teacher for 32 years
- Dual Language teacher at Hooper Ave. Elem in region since 1993
- Transitional bilingual program and Dual Language Education program
- Serve my community by providing intervention support in Math and English subjects
- Prior to LAUSD
 - Taught adult education at non-profit organizations for four years. I taught History, Civics, and ESL.



Personal Roots



Heritage & Lineage: Mexican immigrant parents; maternal roots in Puebla, paternal roots in Jalisco

Birthplace: Born in Los Angeles, California

Upbringing: Raised in Boyle Heights (Estrada Courts, Section 8 housing)

Cultural Influence: Strongly shaped by mother's Indigenous background and spiritual traditions

Connection to Mexico: Ongoing ties to Puebla communities—Huehuetlán El Grande, Manantiales, and Cholula

Formative Experience

Formative Experience: Grade school teacher dismissed and ridiculed family's Indigenous stories

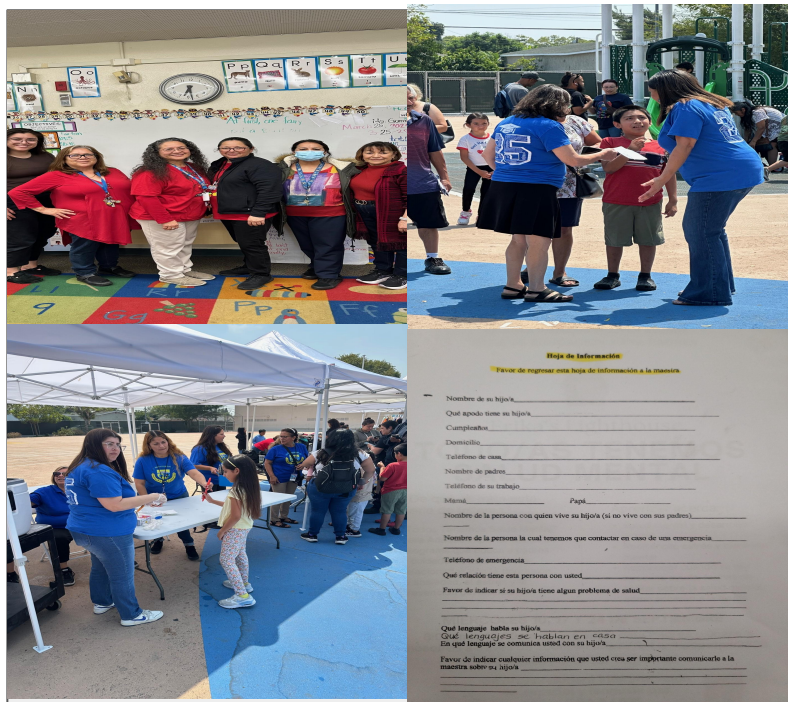
Impact: Realized the importance of validating diverse cultural knowledge and lived experiences

Awareness: Understood how Indigenous voices have historically been silenced and invalidated

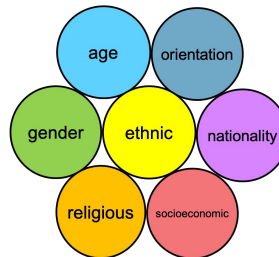
Professional Commitment: As a Dual Language teacher, create a respectful, affirming environment in two languages and foster respect for Indigenous populace globally



Getting to Know My Students



- Partner with administration to host a welcome event for parents and students before school starts
- Send home an informational form to learn about students and families
- Gather important details families wish to share
- Inquire about home languages to provide appropriate support

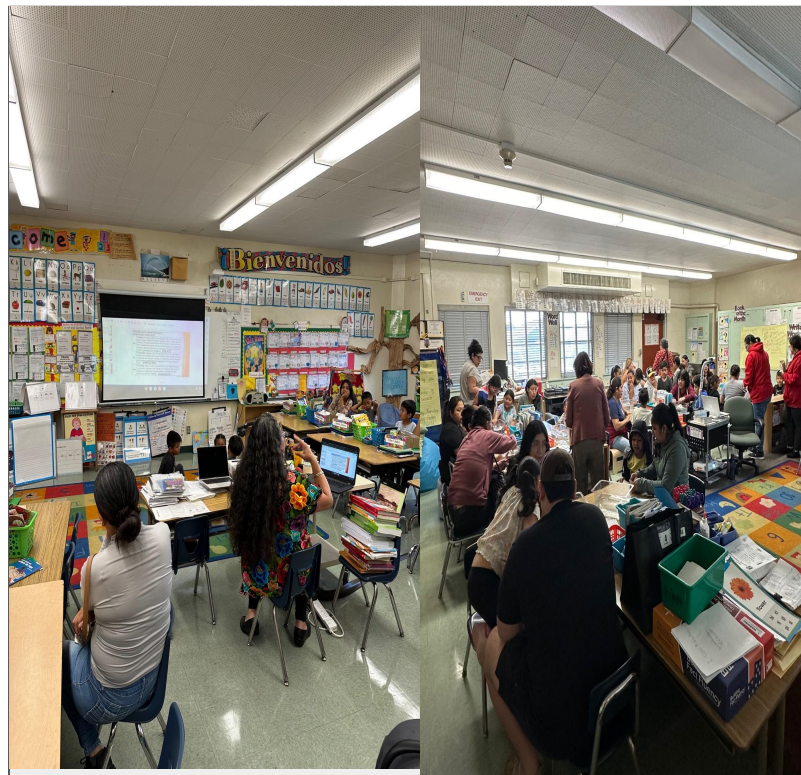


Supporting Indigenous Students and Their Families

- Use culturally relevant texts (e.g., *The Legend of the Poinsettia*) and Social Studies lessons on the First Peoples of North America
- Integrate Indigenous language when teaching about the Original First People
- Create a classroom cultural center featuring artifacts shared by students, parents, and staff
- Invite families to contribute to cultural celebrations (e.g., Día de los Muertos ofrenda/altar)
- Promote appreciation of diverse cultures across the U.S. and the Americas



Supporting Indigenous Students and Their Families



- 30+ years teaching experience in LAUSD, rooted in community trust
- Engage families through native/heritage languages
- Honor culture with regalia and recognition of Indigenous presence
- Elevate Indigenous voices at school events and parent meetings

Maricela Lopez-Samayoa Social Studies Teacher at King Drew Medical Magnet

Principal: Reginald Brookens

My Intersecting Identities

What are my identities and how does learning about my identities empower me as an agent of change?



How do we navigate these conversations in my classroom at King/Drew?



Turn-N-Talk

What are YOUR identities and how does learning about your identities empower YOU as an agent of change?



My Intersecting Identities

What are my identities and how does learning about them empower me as an agent of change?



Me-You-Us

- I know ME
- I know YOU
- I know US



Student Voices

Discussion:

- 1. How can the ideas we heard today reinforce CLRP classroom practice in other spaces (schools, grade levels, departments)?**
- 2. How can we support all educators instructors and school communities to engage in similar CLRP strategies and materials?**

Social Emotional Learning

Educator Lessons for Supporting Students and Families During Trauma



LA Unified 2025 WE ARE ONE
Social Emotional Learning lessons & resources to support educators and families.

Self Awareness
The ability to recognize one's strengths and limitations

- Identifying Emotions
- Emotional Literacy Part 1
- Emotional Literacy Part 2

Growth Mindset
The belief that you can improve your skills and abilities

- Overcoming Setbacks
- Risk-taking

Self-Management
The ability to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behavior

- Managing Anger
- Managing Stress
- Managing Triggers

Self-Efficacy
The belief in one's own ability to succeed in achieving

- My Assets - Know Your Strengths
- Identifying Healthy Relationships

Responsible Decision-Making
The ability to make caring and constructive choices

- Problem Solving Communication
- Conflict De-escalation

Social Awareness
The ability to empathize, understand social and ethics

- Belonging
- Belonging Campaigns

More additional information contact
Karla Lopez: karla009@lausd.net

Social Awareness: Learning from Peaceful Activists

<ul style="list-style-type: none">SEL & Developing Cultural AwarenessMartin Luther King Jr.Rosa ParksAmanda GormanStacey Abrams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cesar ChavezDolores HuertaAlexandria Ocasio-CortezLittle Miss Flint: Mami Cooper
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Wellness Resources (Staff)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wellness NewsletterInner Explorer Resources for LAUSD StaffSwan to Grow SEL Resources: Sanctuary SchoolsSupporting Families Through CrisisCharacter Strong lessons to respond to crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff WellnessEducator Wellness SlidesGrief & Wellness LessonsSEL Educator ToolkitSEL Integration Guide
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Wellness Resources (Students)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wellness for StudentsSEL Student Choice Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Social Emotional Learning Digital Library (via Sara)
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Wellness Resources (Families)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Roadmap for Social-Emotional Well-Being & Academic Success (English)Roadmap for Social-Emotional Well-Being & Academic Success (Spanish)Wellness Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Family Wellness ResourcesFamily Wellness Slide DeckHarmony Family ToolkitSupporting Families Through Crisis
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SEL Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none">SEL Competency Posters5 Protective Factors to Promote Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SEL for StudentsWellness Newsletter
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More additional information contact
Karla Lopez: karla009@lausd.net

Approved by Dr. Justin Lauer
Director, Middle School Instruction

To support the [We Are One campaign](#), the Division of Instruction has curated a collection of SEL lessons, activities and resources for teachers, school staff and families in order to support wellness for our school communities in response to the recent traumatic events taking place in our city.

These resources have been carefully selected to engage stakeholders to address:

- Building capacity in resiliency aligned with the 6 SEL Competencies
- Supporting students, families and school staff with collective wellness
- Cultivating belonging and agency
- Understanding emotional response and development of wellness toolkit coping with stress and anger

Equality is giving everyone a shoe. Equity is giving everyone a shoe that fits.

