

# **“Latinas Struggling with Racial Integration vs. Racial Segregation in Higher Education”**

by María Villagómez, *M.A.*  
and Victoria Estrella, *B.A.*

## Writing Exercise

*Take a moment...*

- 1. If you have an inter-ethnic friendship, share a positive aspect/outcome.**
- 2. If you do not, share a reason why not.**

*Are Latinas racially integrating  
with other groups during their  
college experience?*

*Should we?*



*\*Research shows integration is  
not happening in higher  
education.*

## *Key findings on desegregation and resegregation*

- **Whites are the most segregated group.**
- **Latinos are the most segregated minority group.**
- **The nation's largest school systems are nonwhite and increasingly segregated internally.**

## *Key findings on desegregation and resegregation*

- Segregated schools have much higher concentrations of poverty
- Going to desegregated schools improves students' chances for a desegregated future life

*Have the efforts of public  
integration been successful?*

*Or*

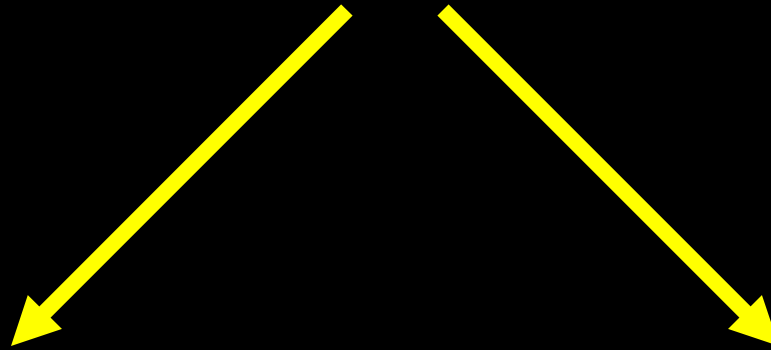
*Is private integration more  
successful?*

# *Efforts of Public Integration*

- ✓ **Brown vs. Board of Education**
  - That the concept of “*separate but equal*” school segregation was unconstitutional.
- ✓ **Proposition 187**
  - End bilingual education.

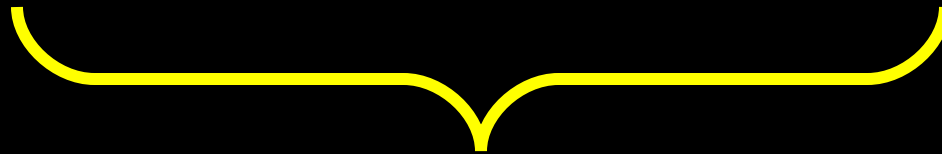
# *Private Integration*

*The transitional experience of racial integration.*



**Cultural barriers**

**Personal challenge**



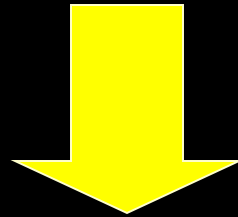
*Am I a “traitor” to my community?*

*Is it “worth” it?*

# **Private Integration**

## **Effective methods**

- ✓ Focus on similarities
- ✓ Take initiative
- ✓ Willingness to learn about different cultures



## **Potential Outcomes of Diverse Friendship Groups**

2. Commitment to racial understanding
3. Gain cultural awareness
4. Interracial interaction outside the friendship group

# *Why are we not integrating?*



## *Campus Life: Identity Clubs*

- We are too divided
- Is the institution supporting efforts towards integration?

## *Cultural barriers*

- Lack of support from family
- Not practical
- Requires effort
- Spanish preferred

# Why are we not integrating?

## Examples of Campus Separation

- ✓ Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)  
Campus Preview/Minority Spring Weekend
- ✓ Georgetown University The Center for Minority Educational Affairs
- ✓ Cornell University Latino Living Center

# Why are we not integrating?

## Causes of Separation

- ✓ Marginalizes our viewpoints
- ✓ Assumes that all minorities share the same opinion
- ✓ Colleges provide remedial services specifically for minorities, stigmatizing minority populations.

# Why are we not integrating?

## Cultural Barriers

- ✓ “Hispanics are placing greater emphasis on language and culture, and less emphasis on mainstream acceptance.”

### Statistics

2. Up from 63% in 1997, 69% of Hispanics say that the Spanish Language is more important to them now than five years ago.
3. Fewer Hispanics are concerned with fitting in and with finding acceptance from non-Hispanics.

# Why are we not integrating?

- ✓ **Mexican immigration is unique**
  - ✓ Proximity to homeland
  - ✓ Size and persistence of migration
  - ✓ The problem of the undocumented
  - ✓ Historical presence of Mexicans

---

•Negotiating Two cultures: Accomodation and Resistance of Latinas with Respect to the Education of their Children in Chicago.

• Immigration; Mexican Americans Are Building No Walls. February 2004. Los Angeles Times.

# *The Challenges of Integration*

- Patience and cultural sensitivity
- Requires personal initiative and effort
- Latinos often need extra encouragement to feel welcomed

# *Outcomes by an integrated environment*

## *Classroom setting...*

- ✓ Enhanced learning is strengthened by an integrated college experience
- ✓ Higher educational and occupational aspirations
- ✓ Positive social interaction among members of different racial and ethnic backgrounds
- ✓ Better academic performance

# What do we do about it?

## *If we want to integrate...*

- ✓ Stop fearing difference
- ✓ Stop avoiding those that are different
- ✓ Focus on our cultural similarities
- ✓ Value and respect our cultural differences
- ✓ Allow proximity
- ✓ Take initiative
- ✓ Stop segregating ourselves
- ✓ Show empathy
- ✓ Create socio-economically integrated neighborhoods

# References

- Afshar-Mohajer, Ramin. Sung, Evelyn. The Stigma of Inclusion: Racial Parernalism and Separatism In Higher Education. Texas Education Review
- Albuquerque Journal Albuquerque. Prominent New Mexicans Share Views on Race Relationships. June 1997. Albuquerque Journal.
- Bennett, Janet M. Intercultural Competence: *A Mindset and Skillset for Campus Leardship*. October 2003. The Intercultural Communication Institute.
- Cashin, Sheryll. The failures of Integration. How Race and Class Are Undermining the American Dream. 2004. New York.
- Contreras, A. Reynaldo. Valverde, Leonard. The Impact of Brown on the Education of Latinos. Journal of Negro Education. 1994. Howard University.
- Editorial. Fighting School Resegregation. January 2003. The New York Times.
- Editorial. Is Academia Resegregating? June 1997. Detroit News.
- Frankenberg, Erica. Lee, Chungmei. Orfield, Gary. A Multiracial Society with Segregated Schools. Are We Losing the Dream? January 2003. The Civil Rights Project. Harvard University.
- Grier, Peter. Thurman, James N. Youths' shifting attitudes on race. They're the most multicultural generation ever, but most are also a tease with the old idea of 'separate but equal.' August 1999. Christian Science Monitor.
- Humphrey, Hubert H. Integration vs. Segregation. 1964. New York.
- Kotkin, Joel. Bilingualism Fight Reveals California'c Racial Divisions. May 1998. The Wall Street Journal.
- Martinez, Jose R. Unspoken fear among Hispanics. November 2004. Denver Post.

# References

- Ornstein, Allan C. Levine, Daniel U. Foundations of Education. 1997. Houghton Mifflin Company. New York.
- Olmedo, Irma M. Negotiating Two cultures: Accomodation and Resistance of Latinas with Respect to the Education of their Children in Chicago.
- Rasberry, William. Integrating Identities. February 1999. The Washington Post.
- Reardon, Sean F. Yun, John T. Kurlaender, Michal. Implications of Income-Based School Assignment Policies for Racial School Segregation.
- Robinson, Karen. MUCH TO BE DONE IN FIGHTING SEGREGATION, EXPERT SAYS. April 2004. Buffalo News.
- Rodriguez, Gregory. Immigration; Mexican Americans Are Building No Walls. February 2004. Los Angeles Times.
- Sailer, Steve. Self-Segregation And Spanish Preferred. July 2001. Los Angeles Times.

*Gracias!*

