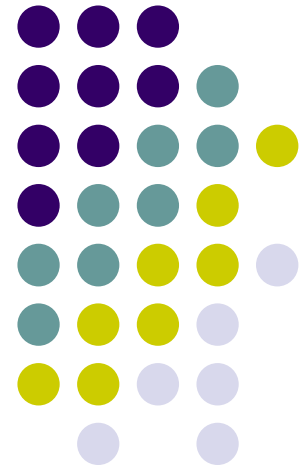


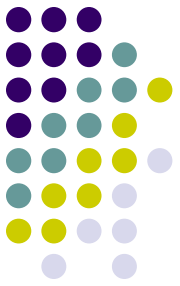
Workforce Development: Integrating Immigrants into the Local Economy

Mark A. Grey

Iowa Center for Immigrant
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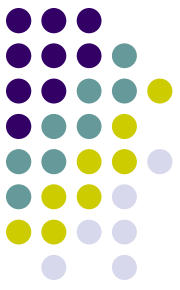


The Challenge of Integration



Language

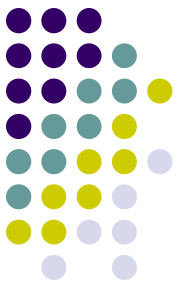
- Few immigrant and refugee adults speak English
- Few established residents speak Spanish (or Dinka or Karen)
- Learning English takes years
- Learning English is second to work and family



The Challenge of Integration

Challenges for Established Residents

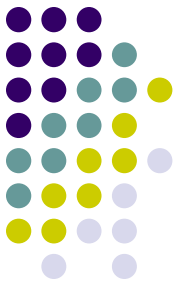
- “rapid ethnic diversification”
- Communities change dramatically and quickly: predominately white → multiethnic
- English-speaking → multilingual
- 5-6th generation Americans of European descent → newcomers from non-European, developing nations



The Challenge of Integration

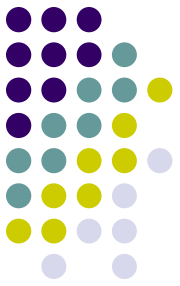
- Demographic isolation → participation in global labor markets
- Mobile Populations
- In some towns: Latino populations grew by 1000% in 5-6 years!
- And now: “Microplurality”

Generalizations vs. Stereotypes



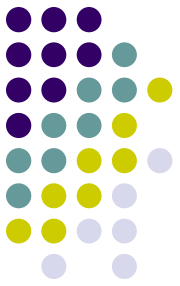
- **Generalizations** are statements about populations based on statistical evidence
 - eg. “Americans tend to only speak one language”
- **Stereotype:**
 - When *individuals* are treated differently or without respect when it is assumed the generalization about a population applies to the individual.
 - eg. Many Americans speak more than one language.

There is not such thing as “ignorance”



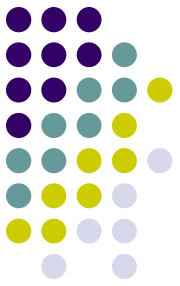
- We are uninformed
- We are misinformed
 - When it comes to immigrants and refugees...
 - People are often both!

20-60-20 Rule



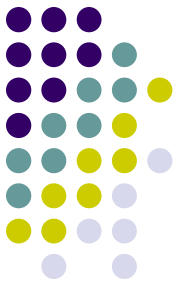
- 20% of a population, workforce, etc.:
 - Already accepts people of different cultures, languages, ethnicities:
 - Active or inactive engagement
- 20% of a population, workforce, etc.:
 - Nothing anyone can do to convince them this is a good thing

20-60-20 Rule



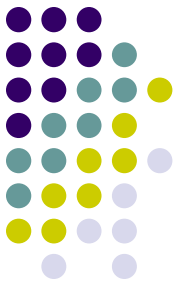
- 60% are not sure
 - This is new
 - This is different from their experience
 - Still learning
 - Assume nothing about what they know and don't know

“Diversity”



- Defining Diversity
 - Assume nothing!
 - What's in a Word?
 - Lack of consistency among companies, organizations, communities, etc.
 - A Cliché?

Cautionary Tales



- **How people define “diversity” depends on**
 - Their ethnic, cultural and linguistic background
 - Their political situation
 - Their relationship to power
 - Their ability to change their circumstances

Cautionary Tales



- **How people define “diversity” depends on**
 - Their willingness to accept (or tolerate) people unlike themselves
 - Their level of flexibility
 - Their willingness to learn about others
 - Their and others’ goals (e.g.. In the community or institutional settings)

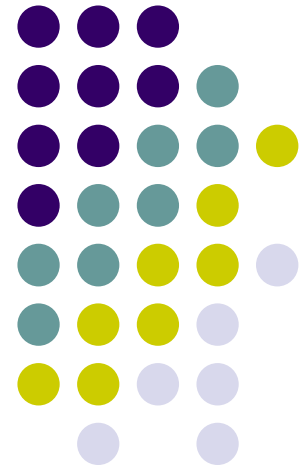
“Diversification” vs. Diversity

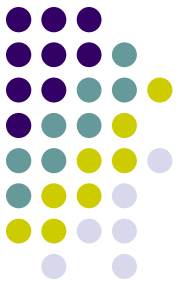


- Is our company, community or organization experiencing “diversity” or diversification?
 - **Diversity** is usually based on a snapshot, or point-in-time perspective
 - Our company is “diverse” because we have 10 Latino families
 - We are experiencing “diversity” because we now have residents with different ethnic backgrounds
 - **Diversification** is a process that places diverse companies within the context of history, the economy, community goals, and labor markets.

Getting to Know You...

Learning more about our
immigrant and refugee neighbors

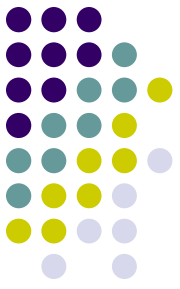




Methods

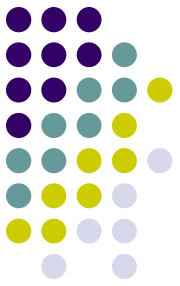
- Generally best to conduct research using face-to-face, in-person methods, such as:
 - Focus Groups
 - Personal Interviews vs. Mailed Surveys
- May often need smaller samples due to funding and time constraints
- May sometimes need to forego statistically significant samples, and replace with “convenience samples”

Additional Considerations



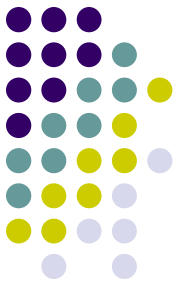
- Can be extremely time- and labor-intensive
 - Recognize need for interpreters
 - Budget time and money for translators
 - Allow time during interviews for necessary “small talk” and interpretation
 - May need to include incentives for participation, like phone cards, etc.
 - Budget mileage and time to do on-site interviewing
 - Recognize trusted interpreters will be asked to do other things (trips to doctors, etc.)

Additional Considerations



- Design research that is culturally specific
 - Methods that work with Latinos may not work with the Burmese
- Utilize natives from that culture to pre-test and modify surveys, recruitment materials, etc.
- Avoid surveys that are too long
- Consider literacy and technology barriers

Additional Considerations



- Be aware of unique ethical issues with immigrants and refugees
 - May face challenges with signing release forms
 - Potential reluctance to use identifiers
 - May think you are with ICE, police, etc.
 - May have historic mistrust of researchers and outsiders
 - Can be easily manipulated and vulnerable
 - Will often resent assisting in repeated research projects if they do not ultimately offer practical results or improvements of conditions

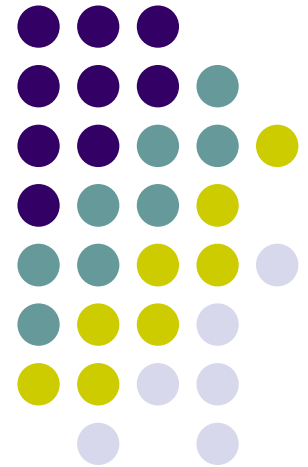


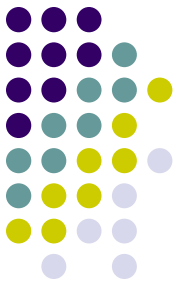
Potential Sites for Research

- Generally best to minimize transportation, geographic, employment, child care and other barriers through on-site research in:
 - Homes
 - Worksites
 - Churches, Mosques, Synagogues, etc.
 - Recreation Sites
 - Festivals
 - Ethnic Markets
 - “Window of Opportunity” Sites (laundry, etc.)
 - Schools

Accessing Immigrant and Newcomer Populations

Outreach and Service
Opportunities





Qualities to Emphasize

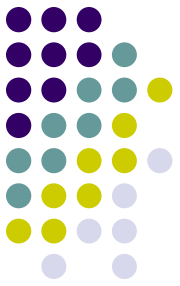
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Humility
- Genuine Interest
- Willingness to listen and learn
- Ability to work at the appropriate level
- Trust
- Face-to-face relationships



Ways to Access

- Bring services to immigrants and refugees, rather than wait for them to come to you
- Consider off-site programs
 - Schools
 - Worksites
 - Homes
 - Recreation and Leisure Venues
 - Markets
 - Worship Sites, etc.

Ways to Access

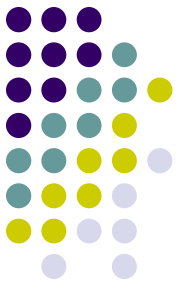


Consider alternative times

- Evenings
- Weekends
- Holidays

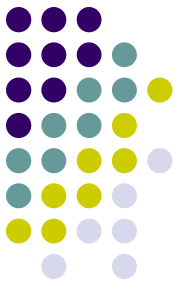
Develop ways to minimize barriers

- Provide childcare
- Offer interpreters and translators
- Make transportation available, etc.



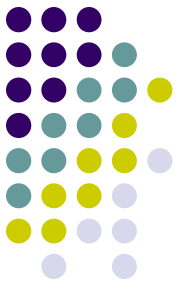
Additional Considerations

- Build trust through genuine human interest in first contacts
- Emphasize results, rather than using populations for own good
- Allow time for interpretation
- Allow time for small talk, coffee, and other necessary cultural interactions



Additional Considerations

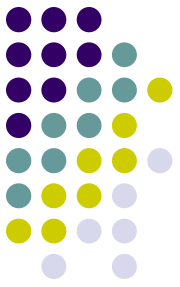
- Utilize gatekeepers (cautiously...)
- Ask for referrals to other friends and families
- Recognize value of word-of-mouth cultures
- Emphasize verbal referrals and recruitment, rather than reliance on written materials
- Be careful in providing access to the minority community to others that are not respectful of them



Keys to Success

1. Leadership Commitment:
 - Community leaders (elected and appointed), police, school leaders, economic developers, others.
2. Recognize and Acknowledge the Role of Newcomers in the Community's Long-Term Economic and Social Health

Keys to Success



3. Developers should play a Positive Role.

- Be honest about the challenges
- Emphasize the opportunities

4. Emphasize **Accommodation** vs.

“Assimilation”

- Newcomers change the most, but communities change, too.



Keys to Success

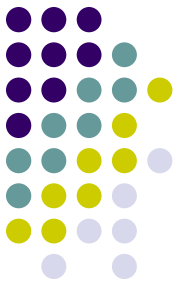
5. Never Make People Apologize for Who They Are

- Newcomers or established residents

6. Be Patient!

- Meaningful Accommodation takes time
- There are no quick fixes
- There is no “cookie-cutter” approach
- Every community is different

Good Luck!



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