

Latinxs and Hispanics in Mathematical Sciences



Sylvia Celedón-Pattichis

Sylvia Celedón-Pattichis was born in Salineño, Texas, and was raised in Miguel Alemán, Tamaulipas, México, until she was 8 years old. Her family moved to California for one year; then they settled in Rio Grande City, Texas. Since a young age, she was a member of her father's conjunto (a musical group), Valerio Celedón y Su Conjunto, where she played the tambourines and later the guitar to help the family make a living. When her family moved to California, she was labeled English as a Second Language (ESL). This label followed her until ninth grade, when her ESL teacher encouraged her to try College Prep English. By default, this new placement changed her life and her path to pursue college level coursework in high school. She learned English as a second language and maintained her first language, Spanish. Her upbringing has been primarily in the borderlands of Texas and Mexico. Her work has made contributions to New Mexico and beyond.

Sylvia Celedón-Pattichis earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Texas at Austin in 1998 with specializations in bilingual and mathematics Education. Sylvia Celedón-Pattichis joined the University of New Mexico in 1999 as Assistant Professor. Currently, she is Senior Associate Dean for Research and Community Engagement, Director of the Center for Collaborative Research and Community Engagement, and Professor of Bilingual/Mathematics Education in the Department of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies at the University of New Mexico.

Sylvia Celedón-Pattichis's research interests include linguistic and cultural influences on the teaching and learning of mathematics, especially with emergent bilinguals; preparing teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students; children's mathematical thinking; equity issues in mathematics education; and integration of mathematics education with other fields. She was co-Principal Investigator of the Center for the Mathematics Education of Latinos/as (CEMELA), an NSF-funded project that involved a collaboration among four universities to develop theory and practice for how to turn language and cultural diversity into educational assets for the mathematics education of all students. A major part of CEMELA's work included co-Principal Investigators mentoring over 30 doctoral and postdoctoral fellows to have integrated knowledge in language, culture, and mathematics. She is currently Lead Principal Investigator for an NSF-funded project that integrates mathematics and computer programming, titled Broadening Participation of Latina/o Students in Engineering Using an Integrated Mathematics, Engineering and Computing Curriculum in Authentic, Out-of-School Environments.

Her most recent works include three co-edited books published by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM): Access and Equity: Promoting High-Quality Mathematics, Grades Pre-K-2; Access and Equity: Promoting High-Quality Mathematics, Grades 3-5; and, Beyond Good Teaching: Advancing Mathematics Education for ELLs. She led a co-edited publication in the Journal for Research in Mathematics Education entitled Asset-Based Approaches to Equitable Mathematics Research and Practice. She was part of the team that co-authored the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics/TODOS Position Statement on "Mathematics Education Through the Lens of Social Justice: Acknowledgment, Actions, and Accountability."

"Hispanic Heritage Month has significant meanings to me. First, this event honors the efforts, sacrifices, and accomplishments of our ancestors and those currently with us in addressing social justice issues. Secondly, these individuals fought for our own rights to pursue education, to advance our own knowledge and understanding of our current situation, and to improve our lives. What I am able to enjoy in the present is due to their sacrifices and work. Many Latinx individuals have opened doors for us, and I am blessed, humbled, and honored to be part of their vision."

Lathisms was founded in 2016 in order to showcase the contributions of Latinx and Hispanic mathematicians during Hispanic Heritage Month, which is celebrated in the United States from September 15 and October 15 every year. During this time, we feature/reveal a prominent Latinx/Hispanic mathematician daily. See all the featured mathematical scientists at LATHISMS.ORG.

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