



# Dr. Lourdes' Story and Vitae

Dr. Lourdes is a National Academic Consultant, Researcher, Curriculum/Program Developer, Motivational Speaker and Author

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Growing up in a disadvantaged family in Puerto Rico, Lourdes soon learned that education was the way out of the poverty cycle. This understanding led her to complete her undergraduate degree in mathematics and begin teaching.

She left Puerto Rico in 1979 to work as a community developer in Guatemala and surrounding countries. She established and directed an orphanage, schools, feeding centers, and clinics. She procured resources for these entities through interaction with non-profit organizations and by obtaining assistance from Guatemalan government officials. Her community education work consisted of educational radio programs and parent education in various venues. Her experience in community development was a catalyst that led Lourdes to choose a degree in Research, Evaluation, and Measurement as the focus of her Master's education.

In 1990, she moved to the United States. It was then that she had to overcome enormous financial, linguistic, and cultural barriers to pursue the American Dream. She first worked as a Middle School Bilingual Curriculum Content (BCC) mathematics teacher in Dade County and then as a High School mathematics teacher in Palm Beach County.

She went on to complete her Doctoral Degree in Leadership and took a position as a School Improvement and Assessment Specialist for the School District of Palm Beach County. She was responsible for developing and implementing programs that assist schools in their school improvement efforts. These programs included staff development opportunities for teachers and school administrators, assessment literacy presentations as well as speaking functions at community forums regarding student academic achievement and performance gaps between diverse student populations.

In 2005, Dr. Lourdes left Florida to work as an Education Consultant in DuPage County, Illinois, and other school districts across the nation. Since then, she has been analyzing student performance data and conducting qualitative studies to find out from the students', teachers' and parents' perspectives the reasons behind the lack of academic achievement of students on states' accountability tests. For the past eight years, she has developed numerous programs designed to increase the academic achievement of all students and close the stubborn academic achievement gaps between diverse student populations. These

programs include state-approved academies for school administrators, staff development opportunities, student seminars and parent empowerment workshops.

Dr. Lourdes' specializes in academic and non-academic issues regarding English Language Learners, Hispanic and African American students and families. She covers a wide range of topics that include cultural competency, achievement gaps between ethnic groups, parent empowerment, culturally relevant instruction, college and career readiness, math Common Core State Standards and state's accountability testing.

Dr. Lourdes is the author and facilitator of the state-approved administrators' academies Closing the Achievement Gap Between Black and Hispanic Students and Their White and Asian Peers (AA #1474) and Successful Leadership Approaches to Serving A Diverse Academic Community (AA# 1200).

To empower parents and help them navigate the American Education System, monitor their children's education and ensure that their children receive a top-quality education, she designed and has successfully facilitated Navigating the American Educational System (NAES) and In the Driver's Seat (IDS), two very popular and dynamic academies for parents.

One of her latest programs, Grooming for Excellence Student Leadership Academy, is an eye-opening and well-received academy program designed to increase students' college and career readiness, motivate them to pursue STEM-related degrees and graduate college with the least amount of debt.

Dr. Lourdes is the author of the books Hispanic Parental Involvement: Ten Competencies Schools Must Teach Hispanic Parents. She also wrote Siéntese en la Silla del Conductor: Las Diez Competencias Para Conducir a Sus Hijos al Triunfo Académico (Sit In the Driver's Seat: The Ten Competencies to Drive Your Children to Academic Success) and co-authored Voices: African American and Hispanic Students' Perceptions Regarding the Academic Achievement Gap. Her latest four publications are different from her previous ones because she wrote them in collaboration with her daughter, Deborah Ferrer and dozens of junior high school scholars from the west suburbs of Illinois. These publications are:

- Reactions: A Collection of Hispanic Student Essays
- Reactions: A Collection of African American Student Essays
- College Casualties: Twelve Competencies to Avoid Becoming One
- Math Phobia: Strategies to Overcome Apathy and Improve Performance