



# CREATING CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE U.S.

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Nancy L. Commins, Ph.D.  
University of Turku  
2011-2012 Fulbright Scholar

# Overview of the Presentation

- What Research Says About Effective Schools
- Framework for Teaching & Learning in diverse schools
- Focus on Cultural Proficiency / Intercultural Competence
- What Educators Can Do Every Day
- Open discussion

# Question to Begin With

Given the dramatic differences between educational system in Finland and the educational systems in the U.S., are there lessons to learn, perspectives worthy of sharing?

# Realities in Diverse Schools

- Learning through a second language is much more than just “learning a second language”
- Teaching students who are learning through their second language is more challenging for teachers.
- When teachers and students come from different cultural and language backgrounds, there can be many misunderstandings in both directions.
- The status of students’ language and culture in the larger society can affect academic success.

# Diversity Is Increasing Everywhere

- Increasing cultural diversity can bring conflicts
- We need to plan ahead for solving problems
- Educators at all levels need time to
  - Express themselves
  - Build trust
  - Acknowledge differences
  - Make agreements

Based on a sound theoretical framework

# Response to Increased Immigration Across Europe & In The U.S.)

- Too often - seen as a burden or challenge
- Needed perspective: it is actually a gift.

## TURN AND TALK

Respond to the statement below

The presence of immigrant students allows educators to create authentic opportunities for all children to gain the intercultural communications skills and world views needed to preserve the planet in the coming decades.



# What We Know About Successful Multicultural Schools

Research from the Council of Great City Schools (2009)

- Shared Vision for Meeting Students' Needs
- Leadership and Advocacy on Behalf of Immigrant Students.
- Comprehensive Planning
- Language Development Strategies in all classes
- Culture of Collaboration and Shared Responsibility
- High quality Professional Development

# Questions We Need to Discuss Openly and Honestly

- What are our beliefs about immigrants?
- Do immigrant children have the same rights as citizens to receive an education?
- Do we have the same expectations for immigrant students as we do for native Finnish-speaking students?
- Do we believe immigrant parents have the same expectations for their children as any other parents?

# Key is not to judge...

- Uncover the assumptions we hold
- Identify and name expectations about schooling that our own culture has
- Learn about how other cultures / groups organize schooling
- Predict where conflicts may arise and how we can help students meet our expectations.

# Characteristics of Well Educated Citizens

## **Basic Academic Skills**

Read, write, compute, scientific method, principles of design, etc..

## **Higher Order Thinking Skills**

Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Evaluate Sources of Information

## **Self Efficacy**

Know where to go and how to get help.

Life long learner

## **Civic Responsibility**

Take an active part in the civic life of the society

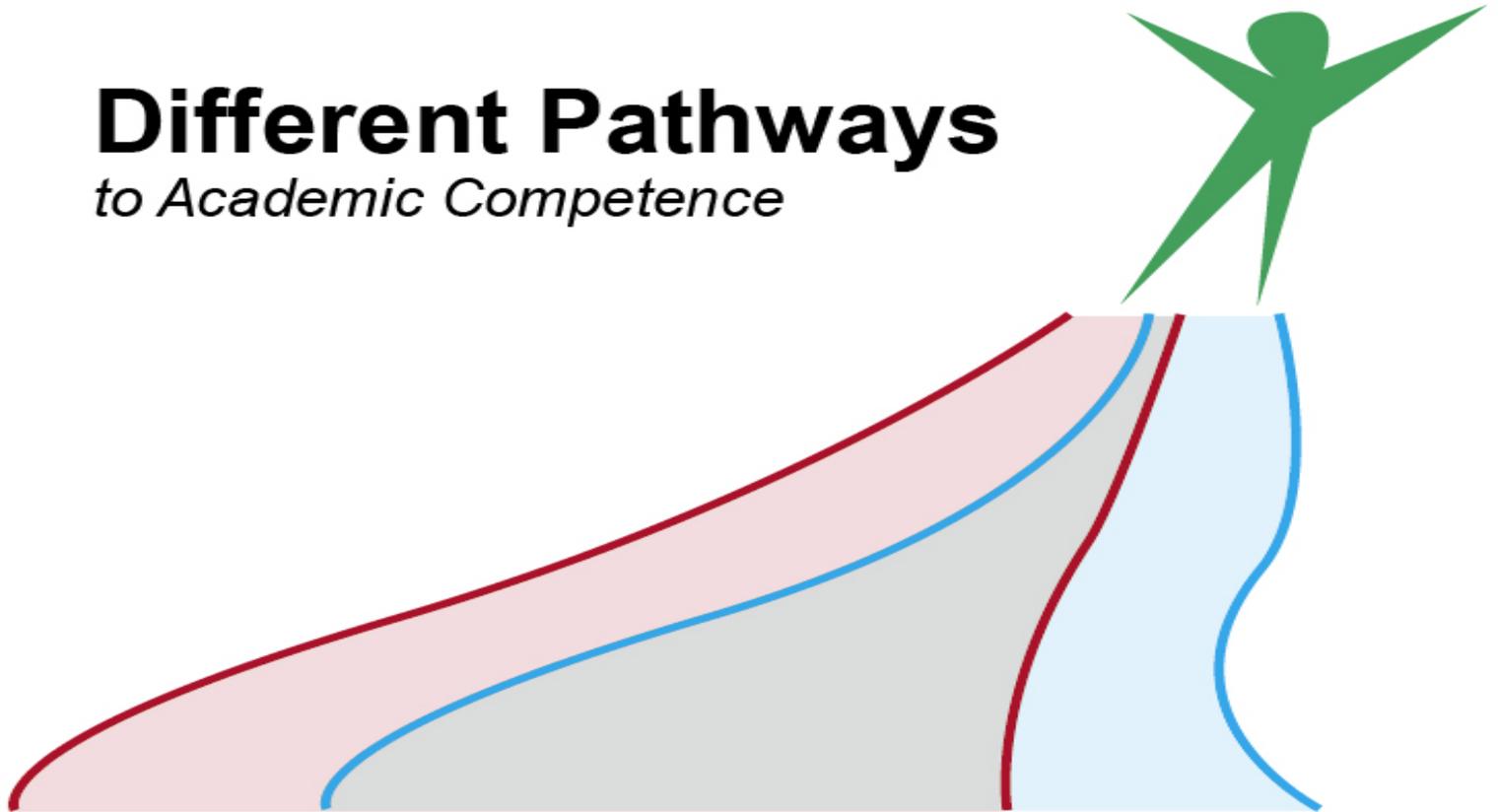
## **Intercultural Competence**

Interact with, learn from, work for, care about and respect people who are different from themselves. (Along the multiple dimensions of diversity)

In an increasingly global society, cultural diversity in our schools helps us prepare children and adults who are better prepared for all these aspects of academic competence

The figure at the end of the road represents academic bilingualism  
Students travel along multiple pathways

## **Different Pathways** *to Academic Competence*



It is easier to create the necessary conditions to get there in a  
multicultural, multilingual environment

# Teaching & Learning in Linguistically & Culturally Diverse Settings

Lessons in  
C1 Groups

Direct Instruction on Equity and Intercultural Competence

Homogeneous  
Groups in L1

Exploring  
Bilingualism

Lessons In  
C2 Groups

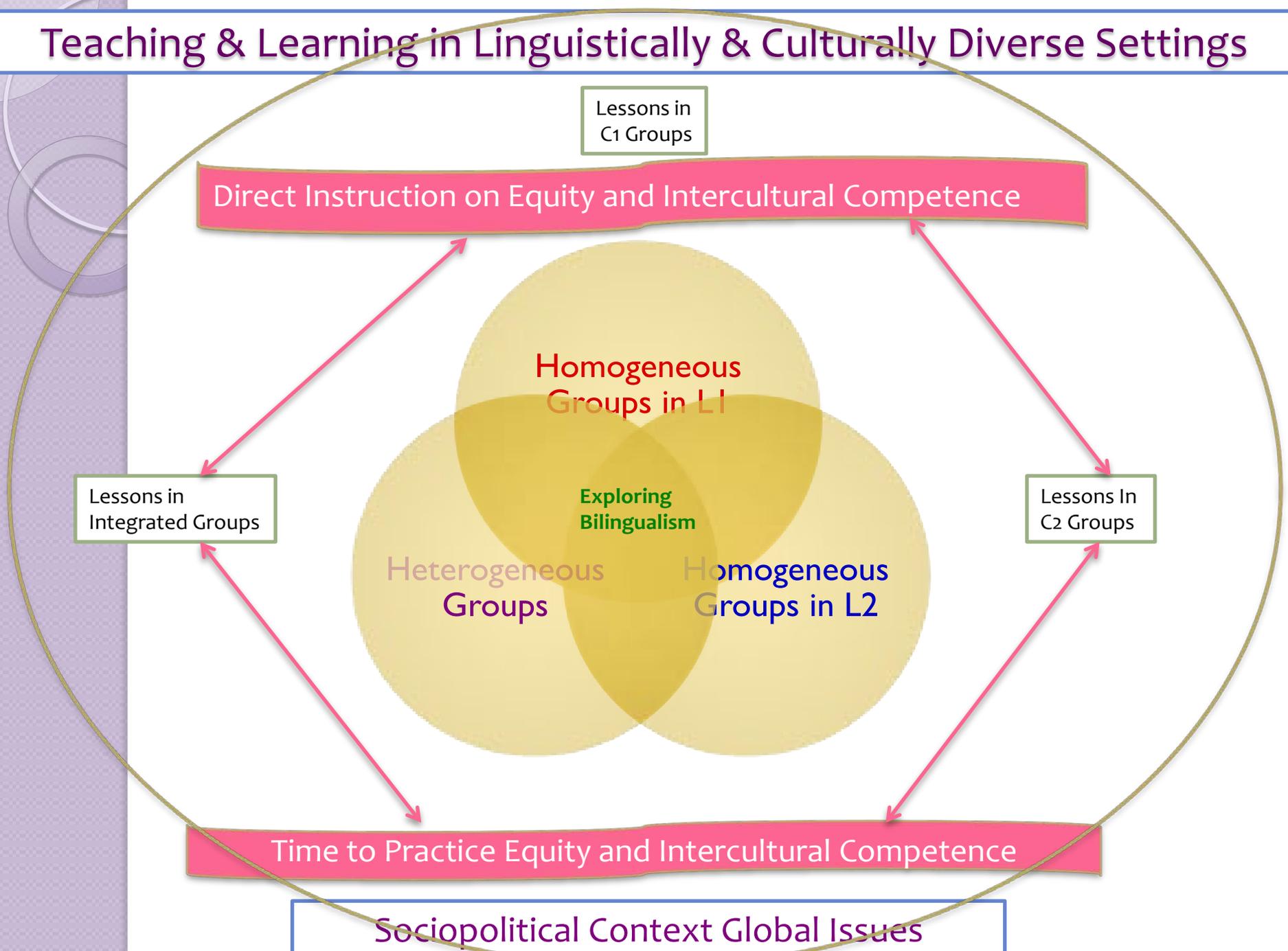
Lessons in  
Integrated Groups

Heterogeneous  
Groups

Homogeneous  
Groups in L2

Time to Practice Equity and Intercultural Competence

Sociopolitical Context Global Issues



# Schooling Varies Across Cultures

- Organization of the institution of school
  - Who is allowed to go to school.
  - Who must go to school and for how long.
  - The age students begin formal schooling
  - How long the school day is.
  - How many days is the school week.
- Status of teachers
- Expectations for parent participation

# Schooling Is A Cultural Practice

To be successful in school, students have to understand the practices involved:

- Where to sit, and where to look
- How to behave inside and outside the classroom
- When to talk, when to raise your hand
- How to address the teacher
- Whether to work with or compete against other students

# Cultural Proficiency

An inside-out approach that **Makes** explicit the values and practices that enable both individuals and schools to interact effectively across cultures.



# Cultural Proficiency

*If students are to become culturally competent so must educators*

We need to acknowledge that learning to survive and thrive together is an ongoing process of

- discovery
- dialogue
- development

# To Provide Equitable Education:

We all need to learn how to

- assess our own culture
- learn to manage the dynamics of difference.
- acquire the skills and language to engage students and their families in communities of learning.

# Becoming Culturally Proficient

means raising our awareness of and closing the gap between

- Our expressed values
- How we are actually perceived and experienced by clients, colleagues, and the community.

# Real Cultural Change

- Involves dialogue to build a new shared way of knowing.
- Recognize that different individuals and groups may and probably do have different ways of knowing how to survive and thrive in the world.
- We remain open and engage in dialogue

# Key Questions For Educators

## TEACHERS:

- What do I know about myself and my attitude & beliefs?
- What do I know about others who are different from me?
- How do I teach and do I reach all students?

# About Students

- What is their cultural background?
- What do they know about others who are different from them?
- How do they learn best?

# About The Curriculum

- For whom are the curriculum and the materials designed?
- What do they teach about differences?
- What attitudes and beliefs to they instill?

# About The Environment

- What is the emotional/ psychological climate of my classroom?
- How do I control the environment?
- What needs of students do I attend to?

# Goal of Cultural Interaction

Make sure that students can

Interact with

Learn from

Work for

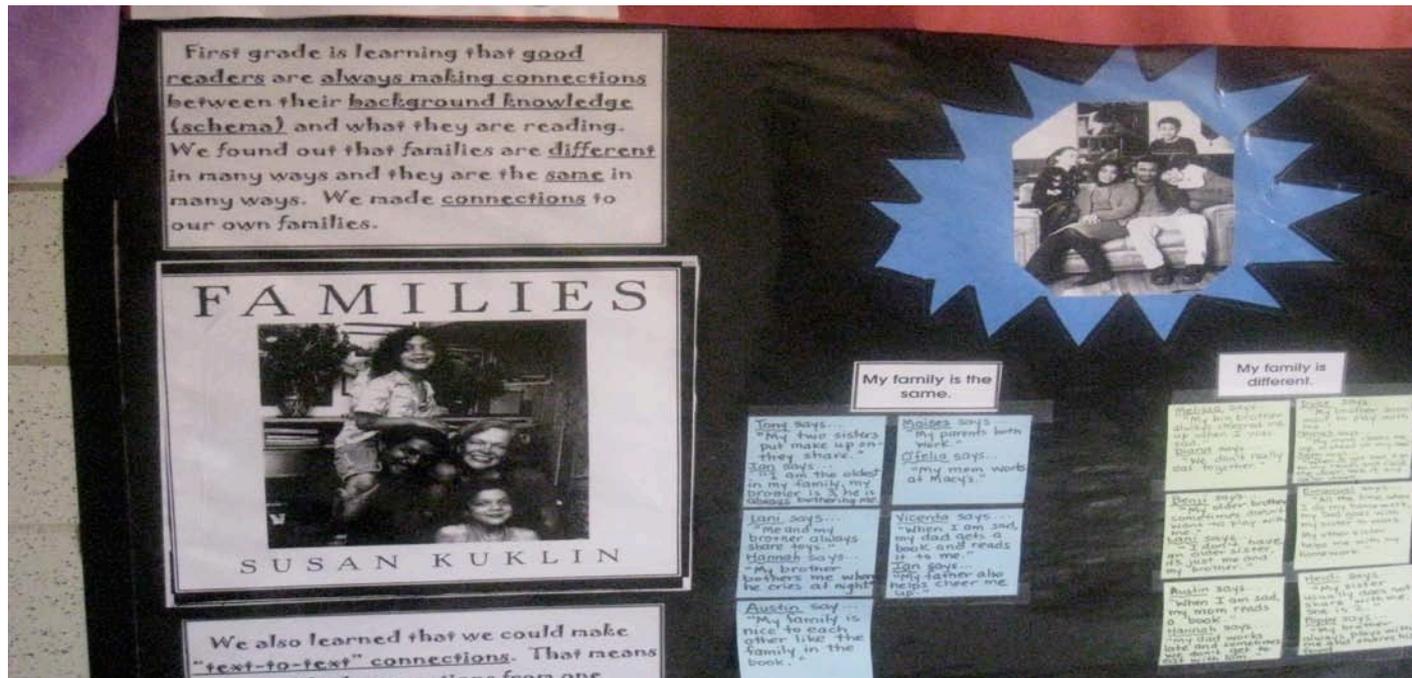
Care about

Respect

People who are different from themselves

# Affirm Identities

- Respect students' linguistic and cultural identities
- Validate students' cultural experiences in school policies and classroom practices.
- Value students' ability to use two (or more) languages.



# Be Open With Students

- Discuss with all students that they are becoming bilingual or multilingual
- Emphasize the intercultural skills needed to be successful in a global economy.
- Affirm the importance of identity and the need to respect each individual as a part of community that works together.

# Be Proactive About Prejudice

- Respect the dignity of each and every student
- Do not accept any kind of name calling or bullying of anyone by anyone.
- Participate in programs that are explicitly anti racist or that promote acceptance of differences (Kiva Koulu)
- Identify yourself as a life-long learner regarding multiculturalism and equity

RESTRUCTURING  
SCHOOLS  
FOR

# Linguistic Diversity

Linking Decision Making to Effective Programs



SECOND  
EDITION

OFELIA B. MIRAMONTES  
ADEL NADEAU  
NANCY L. COMMINS

Foreword by Else Hamayan & Rebecca Freeman Field

A  
Contribution  
to the  
Dialogue



## Organizing Principle:

### Learning Through Two Languages

Instruction should help students to take what they know in one language and express it through the other.

This is facilitated by creating clear, distinct, and meaning-enriched contexts that are intentionally linked across the day.



## Organizing Principle: Strategies, Contexts for L2 Development

Second language development creates an added dimension to instructional decision making.

To be successful, second language learners need **time**, **experiences**, and **opportunities** to learn the concepts of the curriculum and the language to express that knowledge.

# Organizing Principle: Cultural Competence

Organize instruction to help students understand and respect themselves and their own culture, as well as the cultures of the broader society.

Planned cross-cultural interactions are an essential component of programs for all students.





# Organizing Principle: Shared Decision Making

Engage in a school-wide effort in which all adults share in the decision making and instructional responsibilities for all students.

Take into consideration how students will experience their school day, not just what teachers will teach.



## A Whole School Effort - All Adults...

- Participate in decision making
- Share instructional responsibilities for all students



# Student Centered Decision Making

Create a plan based on what students need and how they will experience their school day

... rather than the desires of the adults



# Focus on Equity

Create a climate where all students believe that they belong in the school and will be able to succeed



# Share Responsibility

Group and regroup students among different adults

Team planning and team teaching

Connect themes, topics, and genres across contexts & languages



# Affirm Identity / Mother Tongue

Value students' home cultures  
and their mother tongue.  
Encourage its use at home.

Reach out and bring the  
community into the school  
program.

# Additional Suggestions for Diverse Schools



# School-wide and in the Hallways

- Identify and share with all staff members which cultures are represented in your student body -- including native born, native Finnish speakers
- Make an effort as a staff to learn more about the backgrounds represented
- Start with the biggest group and work from there
- Have staff members find out something to share with the rest of the school

# Be Proactive

- Welcome families from all backgrounds into the school
- Be explicit about the expectations for behavior and explain why you do what you do.
- Promote interaction among students from different backgrounds in your classroom and in the school at large

# Make The School Welcoming to All

- Display a chart near the school entrance showing the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all students.
- Post pictures of the staff with their name in a central area – arranged by grade level or subject area.



# It's as Simple as a Sign

Display words for “Welcome” in as many languages as possible, near the entrances to the school and in other public and shared spaces.



# Affirm Students' Home Language

- Assure that all students see themselves reflected and foster an acceptance of multiple cultural backgrounds.
- Send a unified message from the school encouraging immigrant parents and family members to interact and communicate with their children in their strongest language (usually not Finnish).

# Focus on the Arts

- Search out and publicize community resources from a variety of perspectives
- Incorporate cultural diversity into arts programs
- Expose students to the work of artists, musicians and playwrights from a variety of cultures
- Give students opportunities to express themselves in a variety of artistic forms from other cultures.

# Be Flexible and Open to Learning

- Be aware that students bring with them multiple identities
- Affirm their identities, but don't assume or pigeon hole or categorize
- Invite student participation and allow for the sharing of multiple perspectives
- Use multiple strategies for presenting and assessing information

# I Invite Your Questions & Comments

