

Eileen Gonzalez was born in Puerto Rico. When she was in middle school, she moved to Connecticut with her mother and three sisters.

Life in Connecticut was very **distinct** from life in Puerto Rico. The weather was different, the food was different, and the language was different. At first, it was very difficult for Eileen and her sisters to get used to all of these differences, but after a while, they began to **adapt** to their new life in Connecticut.

One of the biggest changes for Eileen was at school. In Puerto Rico, all of Eileen's **interactions** with teachers and other students were in Spanish. In Connecticut, Eileen had to learn to communicate with others in English. Eileen was placed in a bilingual program, where she was able to use Spanish part of the time. The bilingual program **facilitated** Eileen's learning because she was able to stay on grade level with reading and other subjects while she was learning English.

Many people who move to the United States from other countries lose their first language. It happens so often that a lot of people think it's **inevitable**; however, Eileen's mom knew that she could take steps to avoid this outcome for her daughters. She continued to speak Spanish at home with her girls because she believed that it would be **beneficial** for them all to be bilingual. Today, Eileen and her sisters are all **competent** speakers of both English and Spanish, and they successfully use both languages at home and at work.

When Eileen grew up, she became a teacher. She taught in a two-way immersion program in New Britain, Connecticut. In a two-way program, some of the students speak Spanish at home and some of the students speak English at home. Unlike typical education programs that limit the amount of instruction that students can receive in a language other than English, two-way programs **prescribe** the use of both English and Spanish for instruction so that all of the students will become bilingual. Many people believe that being bilingual will be helpful in our **global economy**, where people from different countries work together.

What about you? Do you speak more than one language? If so, how has speaking another language helped you? If not, would you like to learn another language? Why? Which language?