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Senior Capstone

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Education is a huge transition for many immigrants coming to this country and children face many challenges. As rates of entering immigrants and ELL students rise, the school system has a role in supporting these students properly. In my project, I will look into issues such as dropout rates, self-identity, devaluing of home language, and the achievement gap. Also what I am seeking to find / research is How do educational inequities and lack of representation affect ELLs? This issue is a deep issue in schools that I believe can be fixed if the following above are addressed. There are so many issues so the change that needs to happen will take time and most importantly the proper attention. Hopefully, looking deeper into the problem can lead to new insight into what is working and what is not.

Educational Equity Brief by the National School Boards Association

The Brown vs. Board decision, over 60 years ago, integrated our school systems and promised equal education for all. Years later, diversity has increased, poverty has increased, and so have ELL populations. Schools are becoming resegregated. “The typical black student, for example, attends a school with a two-thirds poverty rate (Civil Rights Project, 2012). As demographics shift, addressing these inequities is becoming more important. “Today the white population is about 63 percent of the total, and is expected to be less than half by the year 2050”.

Data also shows that factors leading to an increase in the achievement gap are funding, high-level curriculum, good teachers, discipline, and absenteeism. “In the U.S. today, our poorest students are nearly four times as likely to fail in math than their wealthiest peers”. These schools are also more likely to have high turn-over rates of teachers, and less effective and qualified teachers work in impoverished schools. “Effective teachers”— that is, teachers whose impact on student learning is above the average – also tend to disproportionately serve in wealthier schools”. Discipline and absenteeism are also big factors contributing to the achievement gap. Data shows that minority students have much higher suspension and discipline rates than their white counterparts. “In addition, students with multiple suspensions have a higher likelihood of dropping out, and can even lead to worse outcomes – substance abuse and delinquency in the community”.

Equity and equality are defined differently and the research brief describes these significant differences. For example, if two schools receive the same funding, and one school has 10 ELL students and the other school has 200 ELL students, the funding being split equally will not provide equity for the students. I noticed that in schools in wealthier neighborhoods they have more sports and clubs than in more impoverished schools. This is because those schools don’t have leftover money for these luxuries. They are spending their money on breakfast and lunch programs, bilingual teachers, and other necessary resources.

The Latino Education Crisis

For many low-income Latino students, the schools are also the first response system for any kind of social, medical, or psychological problem or disability. There is a lack of counselors, librarians, Spanish resources, school nurses, and other personnel to meet the needs of immigrant or Non-English speaking parents. “For many low-income Latino students, the schools are also

the first response system for any kind of social, medical, or psychological problem or disability”. When these low-income schools lack proper resources it can be destructive to families who need more from the school beyond academics. Especially in these areas, where students need more resources, the lack of funding creates a big achievement gap. Another issue is the lack of pre-school and/or starting K early. This puts students in a position from the beginning where they are “tracked” and grouped into the lower levels, where they typically stay throughout their education.

Schools in high-Latino areas such as California, Texas, and Arizona have overcrowded, dirty, worn-out schools that are highly segregated. Segregation of these schools leads to a digital divide, safety concerns, and teachers who are not trained to properly support their students. Also, lack of staff and money is a major issue in these schools. The population isn’t getting any smaller, it’s growing more and more each year. If this issue isn’t fixed or acknowledged this cycle will never end.

Culture is shared symbols, meanings, values, and behaviors. Culture can include race, gender, sexual orientation, class, disabilities, etc. stage 1- the person has a negative belief about his/her cultural group. The person tries to assimilate to “white” culture or is ashamed or embarrassed by their own.

Stage 2- person participates primarily with his or her own cultural community and believes his or her cultural group is superior. People in this group may feel threatened by others

Stage 3-Cultural Identity Clarification- self-acceptance. The person accepts and understands the positive and negatives of their cultural group and has positive experiences with members outside

of their group Stage 4-biculturalism- a person who has a strong desire to function effectively in 2 cultures. For example, someone who is “white” at work but “Spanish” when they go home.

Stage 5-Multiculturalism- a person who understands, appreciates, and shares multiple cultures; believes in justice and rights for all.

Stage 6- Globalism- someone who speaks multiple languages and is well versed in multiple cultures; can fit in anywhere. Besides the different identities of ELLS students, there are also not enough teachers in schools that look like them or are from their native country. To be specific, there are too many “white teachers” in schools. 88 percent of teachers in school are white, It really makes it hard for ELL students to relate to people who don’t understand them or where they come from. Hiring bilingual teachers or people from different backgrounds has to be a priority so kids can relate to their culture or even be exposed to others.

Findings

There are potential solutions and ideas that have come from my research and are starting points, that need to be further researched and implemented to see what works best and what does not. One factor that could benefit the academic success of Latino students in school, is teacher preparedness. All teachers should be trained on how to support ELL students properly in the classroom. There should be adequate resources and cultural texts provided by the school for the teacher to use, and teachers should be taught how to implement these materials. School administration should have expectations that all teachers incorporate differentiation in their lesson plans for ELL students and the curriculum should reflect a variety of languages and cultures. Teachers should also be trained on how to create a classroom environment that sees language as a resource and tool, one to be celebrated and valued. I also believe sometimes

teachers are subconsciously perpetuating negative stereotypes without realizing it, and training should be required.

Podcast Link: it says 24:00 min but its only 15:00min

<https://soundcloud.com/jonathan-mccoy-4/jonathon-mccoy-senior-cap>

References

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