Exploring Concerns of Social Justice in the Education of Minority Language Students within Rural Communities

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RESEARCH TOPIC
Minority language students are particularly vulnerable within the American education system. All too often these students are sectioned off and quarantined from the general student population. This deprives all of the system’s students of a multicultural and diverse experience, while also inhibiting the enculturation efforts of the system among the minority language students. This can have the unfortunate effect of disenfranchising students, and depriving them of the education they are owed. It is pertinent that the manner in which minority language students are engaged and studied, and evaluated for being truly culturally sensitive—so as to ensure that every student has the chance to maximize their potential.

LITERATURE REVIEW
In the American education system students classified as below level in their English speaking skills are relegated to separate classes, and treated differently by their peers and teachers. Whether these students have speech impediments, are English language learners, or have learning disabilities, they face many similar challenges. Isolated from their peers these students undergo systematic attempts to enculturate them with the dominant “proper” language, but much too often these students, especially the older ones, are treated as lost causes—and their systematic deprivation of equal educational opportunities is akin to class warfare.

The framework for analyzing the acculturation efforts of educators among the below level English speakers is best approached from a social justice viewpoint. Scholarship explores this concept of social justice, and relates it to teacher education, calling for the increased social awareness of preservice teachers so as to create with in them a sense of obligation to their community. Scholars all agree upon the need for a bicultural holistic educational system. Only when the community is treated as a real and necessary thing does the education of non-majority language speakers stand a chance.

Analysis is conducted through a series of interviews with teachers, students, parents, administrators, and government officials. Interviews are supplemented with situ observations, and classroom visitations to observe teaching methods. Scholars use participant observation in their methods, in that they often participated in class discussions and in some cases taught the class in which they were held. While some researchers use semi-structured interviews which encourage both the interview and the person undergoing the interview to explore and probe concepts as they crop up. Scholars often find it difficult to divorce themselves from the emotionality of the situation, and fail to conduct their research in a manner which allies itself to program evaluation.

PURPOSE AND FOCUS
Evaluate the Legitimacy of Concerns of Social Justice
- Are minority language students being deprived of equal access to education?
- Are educators making every effort to involve and engage minority language students?
- What societal factors do minority language students grapple with while taking part in the education system?

Make Recommendations to the Enculturation Efforts of Educators
- Are bilingual education programs effective?
- Are student’s home cultures being treated with respect?
- In what ways can students be engaged and assisted to maximize their academic success?

WORK CITED


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