Research Paper

Multicultural Perspective in Special Education

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how Multicultural Education can be used to inform the teaching and learning of English language learners across all disciplines in the United States. It provides an analysis of five dimensions of critical multicultural education, as well as comments on the key areas of focus that can help both English language learners and native-born students understand the course content and each other better. The ideas presented in this article can be used as a starting point for faculty and higher education administrators around the world and across disciplines who want to re-think their classrooms and/or the college/university experience to better meet the needs of the ever-increasing diversity of student through multicultural education research. The keywords used in this article are multicultural education, foreign language education, English language learners, and English as a second language.

Keywords: *English language, Native-born student, Multicultural education, Higher education and foreign language*

Such a focus provides all students with an equitable and equal learning experience 23 and the tools to succeed in the classroom. In the following sections, I will present a perspective on ELLs, briefly discuss how Multicultural Education is defined within the context of this article and present an analysis of the dimensions of Critical Multicultural Education and how they serve as a viable framework for guiding the educational process of ELLs in the United States of America.

English Language Learners in the American Education System
The learning of English is thus viewed as either based on instrumental motivation, meaning it is for achieving a goal and going home, or integrative value, meaning it is a tool for allowing these students to join the English-speaking society as a new member Throughout most countries, ELLs are commonly divided grouped into two main categories, those who are foreign born and those who are native born. The commonality between both groups is that members of each do not speak English as a first language and enter into academic spaces. [1]

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K-12 Education

In the United States of America (U.S.A.), upon enrolling into a school, all students are subject to state and local regulations, policies, and procedures. The field is still establishing itself. This model is still relatively new and developing Likewise, many ELL teachers in the K-12 setting are not properly trained on how to use it effectively to guide. [2]

Post-Secondary Education

Contrary to popular belief and the stereotypes portrayed in the media, the average English Language Learner in community colleges and four-year institutions is not poor, undocumented, nor undereducated ELLs are a very diverse group of individuals. The first type is Generation. These students' linguistic and cultural fluency is highly influenced by technology and the growth of social media. They make up 11% of all colleges and universities in the United States. traditionally focus more effort on assimilating and acculturating them into the mainstream culture rather than embracing and celebrating the individual diversity that these students bring to the classroom. [3]

Multicultural Education and English Language Learners

In actuality, cultural content inclusion (also known as content integration) is just one dimension of what makes a true multicultural education. there is typically resistance toward the embracing of progressive curricular approaches such as Multicultural Education in the U.S.A. The main reason is because it is difficult for many educators to conceptualize how the classroom will look when they are confronted with ethnically and linguistically diverse groups of learners. It forces us all to recognize our complicity in accepting and perpetuating bias of any kind. Students are eager to break through barriers to knowing.When we, as educators, allow our pedagogy to be radically changed by our recognition of a multicultural world, we can give students the education they desire and deserve (44) MCE is comprehensive in its approach to educational reform because of the focus on developing all aspects of a school, including classroom structure, curriculum design, and instructional practices. MCE aims to ensure that these areas of schooling are all simultaneously connected to both the mission of the school and its diverse population of students. Part of achieving this mission is to transform the curriculum in order to help students develop the skills needed to participate actively in constructing knowledge in the classroom. MCE guides educators to question who is the target audience being educated and why, while also being cognizant of diversity among content, learners, process, and the learning environment. Multicultural Education is thus not limited to English-speaking cultures. It is valuable in multinational areas, as well. Higher education in the western world is also starting to see an influx of Chinese students. Interestingly, because language acquisition is a larger barrier for international students, to compensate for their lacking proficiency, many Chinese students will focus on programs in the sciences, engineering, business, and math in an effort to avoid coursework in the arts and humanities where more writing and speaking is involved. Likewise, there are some cultural norms contributing to this decision as well. [4]

Knowledge Construction Process

Because ELLs often isolate themselves in separate parts of the college or university, away from their peers, they lose the opportunity to improve their English skills, make social connections with their classmates, and build their cultural capital. A prime example would be in an introductory literature course where The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost is studied. "What is a road?" They have no conceptualization of these ideas. Emphasis should be on humanizing the teaching and learning process and guiding students to see the

connection between the classroom content and their daily lives. Students best benefit from constructing knowledge through social interaction rather than in isolation. [5]

Content integration

Content integration is important because it provides all students with the opportunity to learn about various aspects of the content they are studying. Successful teachers of ELLs possess knowledge about culture, the process of learning languages, skills in adapting curriculum, and an understanding of the sociopolitical effects on their students. For example, ELLs in California taking a sociology course will have a vague understanding of the cultural significance of crawfish, king cake, and poboys in Louisiana without further explanation from the faculty member about what these things are. One important dimension of integrating content into the curriculum is the focus on mediating cultural disconnects. This means embracing these students' cultures and working to connect them to the course content in meaningful ways. Such connections allow faculty members to better teach all students in the course to be accepting of one another. [6]

Prejudice Reduction

Prejudice reduction deals with creating attitudes that help students to develop more positive racial and ethnic understandings of others. This can be done by providing realistic images of ethnic and racial groups in teaching materials and providing more opportunities for cooperative learning activities within diverse groups of learners. Entering all levels of education for an ELL causes a lot of anxiety. Along with cultural shock, ELLs can also experience language shock where they must cope with having to learn a new language and culture and likewise be confronted with the harsh realities of racism and prejudice. For teachers, a focus on creating an inclusive space which allows ELLs to actively participate without fear of judgement is needed.[7]

Equity pedagogy

In some cultures, the norm of the classroom is rote memorization and teacher- 31 centered lecturing. Thus, more progressive styles of education further push these students to academic areas where they are less likely to have to talk. This is more bolstered when considering these students have to deal with their social life (or lack thereof), housing, and cultural shock associated with living in their new community. Cooperative learning also allows ELLs opportunities to discuss content with native speakers of English in a safe space, thus improving their language skills. By allowing students to construct bodies of knowledge via their cultural frame of reference along with integrating appropriate content that is anti-racist and using effective teaching strategies. The advised equity pedagogy for ELLs is culturally relevant (responsive, congruent or sustaining) pedagogy. [8]

Creating an Empowering School Culture

Being sensitive to ELLs not fully comprehending English and/or cultural norms of the U.S.A. It is therefore ultimately a holistic school approach to educating them that is necessary for noticeable results and for growth to be achieved. Likewise, learning ways of negotiating cultural misunderstandings and creating measures for mediating them before they become larger issues in and around the university are needed. Specifically, training workshops that enable faculty members to gain greater cultural understandings and relationship-building skills with an emphasis on teaching practices aimed at educating diverse groups of learners are preferable. Administrators, faculty, and staff should work together to foster more school-wide dialogues between faculty and students about issues of personal and professional concern. [9]

CONCLUSION

English Language Learners represent one small sub-group of focus in Multicultural Education. Effective multicultural educators consistently use various instructional practices and integrate diverse and impactful content into their course curriculum to further student achievement for everyone enrolled in the course. Critical Multicultural Education views a focus on content integration, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogies, the knowledge construction process, and the creation of an empowering school culture as the core of ensuring educational success for all students. As it relates particularly to ELLs, it is through content integration and prejudice reduction that they are allowed to personally relate to course content. Being cognizant of these three aforementioned dimensions, the knowledge construction process is thus geared toward assisting ELLs in breaking barriers in their learning and overcoming cultural hindrances. Lastly, by creating an empowering school culture, ELLs and others become the center of the school. By embracing Multicultural Education as a framework for teaching ELLs learning thus takes precedence over "just getting through the course content".

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