Education and Poverty

Project Description

Research and Teach about an Issue in Multicultural Education

Choose one of the multicultural education issues addressed in the course, such as curriculum reform, gender differences or institutionalized racism. Research the issue, using a minimum of three resources. Develop activities you could use in a classroom to explore that issue with students. You will sign up for a date to teach the class. You will be assessed on your research and planning (15 points) and reflection on your teaching (10 points).

Research and Planning

Research and Planning

Education and Poverty

In our developing world, education is probably the best long term solution to the end of poverty. Education can help children from impoverished families break the poverty cycle. There are approximately thirty-five million people living in poverty in the United States today. Education and family can both contribute to the success of failure of our future generations.

Compared to other “rich” nations in the world, the childhood rate of poverty is much higher in the United States. The elimination of poverty is key to educational reform. The schools in our country are not living up to the standards that other well developed countries have. According to No Child Left Behind, schools are failing in United States impoverished communities. These areas are filled with poor minority students causing a strong correlation between poverty and poor school performance. As the poverty rate in these schools increase, the test scores decrease. Students from higher level income families are constantly scoring higher on tests than students from lower income
families.

Most children in low income families’ posses a lack of confidence that they need to gain a quality education a break through to a better life. Schools are not always to blame for a lack of education but rather uneducated parents that do not know the best ways to help their children. Parents must encourage children to finish school and give every opportunity possible for success. Children spend an average of 5,000 hours each year outside of school compared to 1,000 hours in school each year. It is important for parents to understand that they are the first step in educational reform.

Families in the higher income brackets tend to have a better education background. They are then able to pass on their knowledge to their children. Educated parents also tend to value education and help their children get ahead in the areas of reading, writing, and math. Students from higher income families also have better resources. They have more access than low income families to educations resources, technology, and toys.

Statistically, students from lower income families have poor expectations and low motivation. This means that impoverished students do not face high expectations from family, teachers, and peers compared to students of high income families. Children in this socioeconomic bracket tend to not be confident in their own abilities. Why should they expect anything of themselves when no one else does?

Parents are supposed to be a role model for children, however the average impoverished family have little motivation or work ethic. Most families in this category support their families on about 800 hours of work per year. That is only about 16 hours per week. If work hours were raised to one adult working 40 hours per week, 75% of poor children would be released from their impoverished status.

Segregation in schools by race is no longer allowed, but it still occurs noticeably to some extent. This segregation is systematically linked to socioeconomic status, residential location, and even language. It is clear that schools are hardly segregated by race anymore but rather segregated by the impoverished and well-off neighborhoods.
IN outlying suburbs, there is severe white isolation. White people are the most isolated of the races in the United States. In the cities, minority schools are present, dominated by the African American and Latino races.

Poverty is not just a financial issue but also an emotional issue. There are high rates of violence and drug use in impoverished neighborhoods. Unfortunately, violence and gangs are a grim reality for children in this world. The worry about being hurt or feeling unsafe limit the success that is possible in school. These children are unable to concentrate due to uncomfortable conditions of living; possibly in the colder climates without adequate heat or hot climates without access to air-conditioning. Success in the inner cities is hindered by: housing inadequacy, failing infrastructure, a lack of mentors, shortage of jobs, and a lack of health as well as proper nutrition.

High poverty schools have trouble attracting and retaining good teachers. The curriculum in these schools tends to be less vigorous putting the children at a disadvantage for future jobs or the furthering of education. These schools also have less access to the latest and greatest forms of educational resources whether it is new textbooks or computers. Eighty-eight percent of the United States’ high minority schools are also high poverty schools. Studies show that attending a middle class school exposes minority students to higher expectations with more educational and career options.

It is clear that our nation needs to step up and start looking out for the impoverished families living in the United States. We need to create support systems to get these children through high school and on to better paying jobs or college. If no one takes action, the poverty cycle will not be broken but rather continue to flourish.

**Lesson Plan - Must be submitted one week prior to presentation with references and article (10 points)**

(1) Context

Three Activities in the Classroom: Education and Poverty

1. Invite a guest speaker from a high poverty school (teacher, student, principal) to discuss the extra obstacles of
these children compared to middle and high class schools
2. Do a service project by volunteering at the local soup kitchen, homeless shelter, or food shelf.
3. Have the classroom sponsor a school wide food drive, coats for the Salvation Army, Toys for Tots, bell ring, etc. to help out those who are less fortunate.

Goals and Objectives

Assessment

Strategies

(1) Materials - Must include references

Reference Page


Reflection

Presentation on Issue in Multicultural Education

Your reflection is due one week after you present (10 points).

Please use these questions as a guidelines; they do not need to be responded to in the order they are given. This should be the equivalent of a 2-3 page paper.

Why did I chose this issue?
What prior knowledge and experience did I bring to this issue? What were my assumptions or biases?

What was my discomfort level with the issue? What was uncomfortable?

What were my concerns about other classmates comfort/discomfort level?

How did I perceive my classmates response to my presentation? What were indicators of their response and their learning?

How did researching and presenting on the issue prepare me for teaching in a school setting?

What teaching strategies were most/least effective?

How could I develop further my understanding of the issue and my strategies for teaching about it?

How can I apply what I learned to other issues in multicultural education?

**Rubric**

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<td>9-10</td>
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<td>7-8.5</td>
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Reflection Document

Why did I choose this issue?

I grew up in a middle class school but there were children that attended there that visibly lived an impoverished lifestyle. I had a heart for those children then and I still do now. I currently work with several low income and single parent families at a local elementary school. I wanted to do further research about how poverty affects these children and their learning abilities.

What prior knowledge and experience did I bring to this issue? What were my assumptions of biases?

My prior knowledge of education, children, and poverty all comes from life experiences and classroom discussions with my peers. I was exposed to impoverished children when I was a child and I still am today. This school I work at is known to be composed of many low income families. My main assumptions before doing my research had to do with the parents of impoverished children. I assumed that many of these children came from homes with only one parent of only one parent working very little. This I found to be mostly true when doing research. I also had a bias that all impoverished families are lazy but I discovered that sometimes they just do not know any better because that is the same way that they were raised.

What was my discomfort level with the issue?

I did not find the issue of poverty in our country as uncomfortable as the fact that our nation is doing very little to help get families out of poverty. Welfare in my opinion is too much of a crutch for its consumers. Parents need to learn the proper skills necessary to help their children get a better education. Another issue that I found discomfuting was that our country has one of the highest childhood poverty rates of any well developed country.

How could I develop further my understanding of the issues and my strategies for teaching about it?

The best way to get a better understanding of the high poverty schools would be to do a field experience or student teaching in one of these schools. You could also talk to teachers from these schools and ask about personal experiences. The most obvious way to find out more about poverty and education is further research. When teaching about poverty, one must be very sensitive to the feelings of those children who may be living an impoverished lifestyle as you would not want to offend them.