

Challenges Facing And Their Interventions

ESL/LEP: Challenges Facing ESL/LEP and Their Interventions

Introduction

ECS (2010) asserts that bilingual education is a mode of teaching entailing students who are language-minority in public schools. The notion here is that coaching English Language Learners (ELLs) partly in their native language will promote their comprehension of the curriculum and aid them achieve in an otherwise English-based setting. The anticipation is that ELL students can go on with their education in classes together with their English-speaking counterparts when they become fairly proficient in English. The ELL program ensures that students are subjected a satisfactory program until they are in a position to write, read and understand English well enough to partake meaningfully in all elements of school's curriculum (ECS, 2010). There are different programs that schools use to engage ELL including ESL/LEP, dual-language immersion, and transitional bilingual education. This paper will therefore discuss ESL/LEP, the challenges and the effects of this approach on academic and social aspects of the students. Additionally, the paper will talk about the measures in place to correct the issue.

ESL/LEP

In ELLS, the initials ESL stand for English as a Second Language meaning English learned in a setting where predominantly, English is the communication language. On the other hand, LEP stands for Limited English Proficient, a phrase used to refer to English language learners using English as their second language. An LEP student is the one who is not totally English proficient, speaks another language at home as opposed to English, and does not exhibit English language comprehension's skills, writing, reading and speaking at a position that would put them in a mainstream, English only environment (ECS, 2010).

The chief focus of an ESL program is teaching students in the English language. Students of diverse languages may be included in a class, entirely getting intensive instructions. In most cases, the language of instruction is English entailing little or no absence of native language of ELL. ESL is normally taught within a particular school session, and students participate in other bilingual, immersion or mainstream classes through the day.

Challenges of EPL and How It Affects Students Academically and Socially

There are a number of challenges that face student in an ESL/LEP program and the students within in it in general. First of all untrained teachers are frequently unable to identify high potential indicators within traditional populations. This difficulty as ECS (2010) reports is multifaceted with language minorities. This affects students academically in a negative way as their academic needs are not adequately taken care of. The social implication is that there underperformance may make them feel isolated and lower their self esteem.

Secondly, most of these students are from poor families hence their level of formal education and poverty are thought to affect their academic achievement and performance. According to researches, “students from families that are limited English proficient are 12 more likely to have completed less than five years of schooling than English-proficient students” (ECS, 2010). Additionally the likelihood of LEP students to live in poverty is 50 %, hence both the socioeconomic status and longer learning years negatively affect the academic and social well being of the students.

Another obstacle experienced by ESL/LEP school principals and students is segregation. Studies indicate that from 1991 to 1992, approximately 73% of Hispanic students attended secondary and elementary schools with tremendous enrollments of minority students. This figure represents an 18% increase from 1968-69. 38 % of Hispanic students got enrolled in schools with at least 90% minority students in 2000. Additionally, 77% of this group was enrolled in schools where minorities entailed more that 50% of the population. Furthermore “primary LEP students have two times high chance of attending inner-city schools made up of high concentrations of minority and poor students” (Crawford,1997).

Another challenge is inappropriate placement and assessment of LEP students. Historically, this there has been overrepresentation of this group of students in classes of special education due to improper LEP students’ placement and assessment (ECS, 2010). Failure to properly address this issue has facilitated a failure to realize the academic potential of LEP students, making their scores to be often artificially low. LEP students will also lack friends because of the belief that they are academically challenged.

Another challenge relates the parent’s English skills. There a big percentage of language minority students stay in households where there is no one who can fluently speak English, over the age of 14. This is a big problem as there is no one at home to help them perfect in their English speaking skills. Communication with others in school becomes a problem and also there is a problem in understanding subjects taught in English (ECS, 2010).

Lastly, language diversity in schools is also another issue facing LEP students. Most schools having LEP students, who enrolled recently, face problem of school community and staff being insufficiently trained to efficiently educate language learners. The students face hardships in their academics due to inadequate coaching.

Interventions or plans are in place to correct the issue

The first intervention to deal with LEP challenges is, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act's Title III particularly call upon all districts to verify that all LEP teachers are fluent not only in English but any other language that is employed for instruction (Crawford, 1997). This attempts to solve the problem of language diversity in schools. The second intervention for the program is an assurance from teachers and principals that their will be proper placement of students basing on designed procedure of assessment. This could go a long way in solving the dilemma brought about by inappropriate assessment and placement of SEP students.

The problem of parent's skills in English could be solved in a proactive way. First of all during the process of incorporating the school's LEP student population within community, there is a need of translating meetings and materials into its student's language (ECS, 2010). The multilingual communication's barrier could be broken by using various multilingual computer and web-based technologies like online translators. This can only work in a situation where families can access translators and if they clear, accurate and reliable. However, teachers need to take caution while dealing with such technologies for they are sometimes very unreliable and it could be misleading and confounding using them.

My thought about the issue is that schools should endeavor to incorporate LEP students within the settings to allow them suit within comfortably. Schools can additionally provide ESL classes at an adult-level in schools to allow parents learn English and help students at home. They could also share the required socio-cultural information with parents concerning the schools. Finally schools can also organize meetings and invite parents on voluntary basis and offer them meaningful approaches to participate within the school.

Reference

Crawford, J. (1997). Best evidence: Research foundations of the Bilingual Education Act. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. Retrieved November 5, 2010, from <http://www.ncele.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/reports/bestevidence/index.htm#Contents>

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