

Pre-service ESL Teachers and Undocumented Students

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Background

This research project describes a course that explores pre-service ESL and bilingual teachers' awareness of and attitudes toward undocumented students in U.S. schools. Demographic research indicates that, on average, there are two students in each classroom that are undocumented or have undocumented parents or siblings (Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011). Other research demonstrates that pre-service teachers lack knowledge and awareness of contemporary social issues that garner extensive media coverage, such as undocumented immigration (Journell, 2013). Further, there is a deep research base suggesting that teacher education experiences focused on social issues evoke avoidance or resistance on the part of preservice teachers (e.g. Garrett & Segall, 2013). However, very little has been written about pre-service teachers' awareness of and attitudes toward undocumented students in K-12 education.

Research Questions

In what ways can teacher candidates' awareness of and attitudes toward undocumented students change over the course of the semester?

Research Methods

The research design employs mixed methods: qualitative data (critical reflections), quantitative data (surveys), and demographic data (gender, language spoken at home, credits earned, ESL or bilingual minor). Participants were recruited from a convenience sample of pre-service, pre-program ESL/bilingual teachers (n=32) within a teacher education program at a small public university in the Midwest during the fall of 2018. Changes in teacher candidates' awareness of and attitudes toward undocumented students will be based on pre- and post-critical reflections and scores on a survey adapted from three other surveys: a Pew Hispanic Center Survey, the Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey, and a survey by Buchanan and Hilburn (2016). The data generated by this case study will be analyzed inductively and deductively (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

Findings

Findings TBD

Course Intervention

The intervention is a teacher education course (EDU 235, *Home, School, and Culture*) that presents scholarly books and peer reviewed articles, as well as documentary film and first person narratives regarding undocumented students and their families in the U.S. Key readings were *Con Respeto* by Valdes, *Children of Immigration* by Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, and *Lives in Limbo* by Gonzalez.

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