



MELISSA STENCIL

HOW I FIT INTO TODAY'S EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

The Changing Demographics of America's Classrooms



Over the last century, there has been increasing diversity in America's student body population. In 2014, the nonwhite population of school students exceeded the population of white students. However, the teaching staff remains predominately white (Spring, 2016, p.143).



Today, the primary role of a teacher is viewed as educating workers for the global economy; a marked shift from the original role of protector of American morality and character in the 1800s (Spring, 2016, p.265).



With increasing diversity, comes a rise in English Language Learners in America's classrooms. However, 75% of teacher preparation programs are failing to prepare teachers for this (Spring, 2016, p.169).



The goal to prepare students to compete in the global labor market has led to an increased use of technology in America's classrooms and an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

MY ROLE TO PLAY

Acknowledging Privilege



As a white, upper-middle income female, currently teaching a student body that is over 90% Hispanic/Latino, with over 60% being English Language Learners, I have had to acknowledge the differences between how I experienced the educational system growing up and how my students and their families are engaging with it. Acknowledging this privilege is the first step to dismantling an inequitable system.

Encouraging/Empowering Student Collaboration/Voice.

Additionally, I have worked and will continue to work to enhance student voice and collaboration in my classroom. Letting my students and their families bring in ideas and materials from their culture to enhance their learning experience has been critical to creating a classroom that values each diverse student voice.



On-Going Professional Development

Lastly, I have a responsibility to continue my professional development in order to learn new and more effective methods of teaching. My students deserve a teacher who continually strives to find new ways of teaching that are responsive to their individual needs and cultures. Attending workshops and collaborating with fellow teachers will be a core component of my ongoing professional development.

