Urban Education: Feed the Children

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Urban education is a term that many people have misconceptions of. People might have words to describe or may hint on what they think it means, but nobody has a frank definition. The most common description is, "a school in an urban setting." However, that definition is quite simple because it only briefly touches the surface of it all. Urban education is much more complex than a one sentence definition because even that definition is only true to an extent. Urban education is not created of one concept but rather three. Political economy, ideology, and schooling are three factors that influences urban education as a whole. People need to understand the impact that urban education has on, not only the students but society as well. Once there is an understanding of urban education, people will have a better comprehension on its importance. There are still many ways in which urban education can be advanced and improved, and one of them is by adapting to the vindicationist philosophy.

Political economy, ideology, and schooling are the components that create the foundation of urban education. This is why the definition mentioned in the previous paragraph is not completely true. Political economy influences urban education greatly because of its history in our country. As Ladson-Billings mentions, "We do not have an achievement gap; we have an educational gap" (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Our country is deeply in debt and because of the way that our society is structured, low-income minorities end up facing the consequences. Urban education schools are usually in depth of poverty and lack academic resources for their students. Because of this debt, not every student is capable of receiving a quality education and society justifies this act by assuming that not every student is entitled to receive an equal education. This mindset then creates the issue of educational gap between schools that Ladson-Billings mentions.

Ideology feeds off of political economy as well. According to Tozer his understanding of ideology is as follows, "The ideology that becomes dominant in a society is almost always articulated by those who derive the most power, goods, and prestige from the existing social organization" (Tozer et al., p. 10). These two elements relate to one another due to social construct. In ideology social practice plays a tremendous role. The way that society sets an ideology is by allowing the dominant social group to determine what is best for everyone, and it tends to only benefit them. This is where race consequential social practice view. Labeling, ranking, and social classing are included in race consequential social practice (Croom, 2016). Since society's ideology was created by the majority, Caucasians, it is now normalized for them to be ranked as superior. They have created this structure indicating that if you are not of non-color, then you do not deserve and/or are not capable of being equal to them. This is another cause of the deficits in the educational pipeline.

Last but not least, schooling is the last factor that completes urban education. Schooling in this sense refers to having experiences within school but does not necessarily have to be educational. Some of these experiences have to do with life at home, culture, or community. Many teachers do not consider how life outside of the classroom walls can have an effect on children's learning. Some children do not have the privilege to just worry and focus on school. There are children who have to worry about getting home safe, fulfilling their role at their household, and the list can go on. Once teachers start viewing their children as humans and not just students then their will be a better approach in their teaching practice. Two of the greatest points that Jeff Duncan-Andrade stated was about the socratic sensibility and trust pillars of effective practices in classrooms. He explains the socratic sensibility pillar as understanding one's self growth as a teacher, and that teachers need to adopt the mentality of always finding

ways to better themselves in their own practice (Duncan-Andrade, 2007). By adapting this way of thinking, teachers will understand that there is much more to their profession than just creating a curriculum. A teacher in an urban school must take every variable that may affect their students' learning into consideration, like their urban communities. The second most important pillar is trust. In creating a relationship with students not only is trust being strengthen, but the teacher is humanizing their students. As Duncan-Andrade implies, in humanizing students they are developing positive self-identity, purpose, and hope within the students (Duncan-Andrade, 2007). Duncan-Andrade comes to prove that a core curriculum is not the only thing needed to reach achievement. A connection and understanding of the people you are working with, mentoring, and influencing plays a big role as well to achieve a successful practice.

Unfortunately, there are many deficiencies within urban education and how it is constructed. However, one way in which we can improve urban education is by adopting the vindicationist philosophy. The vindicationist philosophy states that all children of color, especially Black, are capable of academic achievement (Hoover, 1990). What this philosophy implies is that in order to defeat this inequality in the educational system, we must go against the social construct. We need to shift those negative stereotypes into more positive perspectives. We need to stop doubting the intellectuality of colored children. We need to stop whitewashing the history taught to our children. We need to stop implying these stereotypes upon our children such as drop outs, dealers, and teen pregnancies. We need to stop idolizing Caucasians as if they're the prime example. Because of the way that society is constructed, people of color are born metaphorically "hungry" without them even knowing. Most children of color go into low-income urban schools that lack academic resources, and often they believe that school is like that for everyone. They likely do not know that other high-income schools give their students new

textbooks, laptops, iPads, or more resources in general. Children of color arguably believe that it is normal to be a little bit hungry. That it is supposed to be that way. However, these children end up growing up and start realizing that schools up north have a little or a lot more extra "food" than their school. That the whole, "there isn't enough money for schools," is a lie. They now become aware that being hungry is not something that should be normalized. In fact, children of color come to realize that their hunger is indeed starvation. Starvation because they have been exposed to the injustice that was allotted to them because of class or race. With the vindicationist philosophy, we are resisting that inequality. By adapting this philosophy, we are now fighting for our full plate. We are fighting for our seat at the same table as Whites. We are proving to society that students of color are just as good or even better than Whites. We are resisting the normalization that Whites are superordinate. We are fighting to feed children of color the same amount of knowledge as White children. The vindicationist philosophy is the fight for equity that the urban education needs.

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