

Learning Context:

SEIS School
Roosevelt High School

I am working in SEIS school, a small school on the Roosevelt Campus. SEIS school was founded to support bilingualism. It focuses on teaching in both English and Spanish and strives to allow students to be comfortable expressing themselves in both languages. Although most classes are taught in English so the program is not truly bilingual education, SEIS school allows students to answer and speak in Spanish without repercussions or without shaming students who use Spanish or other languages besides English. This philosophy has proven to be successful in many ways. The teachers that I have spoken to told me that the caring and excitement that I encounter at SEIS was not present before this program. Previously, non-native students felt alienated in the Roosevelt school and feelings of despair were rampant within the student body. Creating a smaller school with a strong sense of cultural and linguistic pride had revitalized many of the students and given them a sense of real community.

It makes sense that at SEIS the student body identified themselves as Hispanic. Only 14% of SEIS considers themselves Caucasian and the rest of the 25% of SEIS students are African American, Asian/Islander, or Native American. It is interesting to note, that the ethnic population of SEIS is not consistent with the population of Roosevelt on the whole. ACT is primarily made up of Caucasian (48%) students and African American students (21%). In the POWER school the racial composition is very diverse, African American students make up a large percent of the student body (29.7) and Caucasian students make up 36% of the population. In both of the other small schools, Hispanics make up a very small percentage of the student body. Despite some

controversy on the seemingly segregated schools, this division is chosen by the students and not delegated by testing or administrators. Although it seems to make sense that the majority of Hispanic students would choose to work in a Spanish Bilingual program, there is less intuitive reasoning behind the ethnic makeup of the other schools.

The fourth period Humanities class that I have been teaching in for my work sample is a very small class. There are 18 students enrolled in my class, yet there is consistently only about 14 students in class at a given time. I have also seen about four students come and go since the beginning of the year, so the class size has fluctuated throughout the year. This class is made up of mostly juniors, three seniors, and one very special needs sophomore. The class is split almost down the middle by gender. The students in my 4th period class are much more mature than the sophomore class that I am working with 3rd period, but with that maturity also comes a more rebellious nature.

There are at least 3 students in the class that consistently refuse to do any work. The Thursday class is early and often there will be only 3-4 students in class for the first 45 minutes of the block class. The students do definitely care though and they are also very smart. Most of them have a lot on their plate though. One of my 4th period students was in AP English but had to drop down to my class when his mother was apprehended by ICE in the Del Monte raids. He like most of my 4th period class work part-time or full-time jobs to help support their family. After the first few days of my unit, this same student moved to my 6th period class. Many of the girls in my 4th period class are also one of many siblings in their household and must spend much of their evenings taking care of their younger brothers and sisters. Two girls miss a couple days a month staying

home with siblings too sick to attend school. Four of my students in this class have IEP's while two were on modified diplomas.

The class that I am working in is a large classroom. We have tables that students share instead of having individual desks. Each table seats two students. The classroom is equipped with two computers. One of the computers is almost inoperable due to its slowness and age, while the other computer is used for grading and cannot be accessed by students. On the whole, computer access is unavailable for my students unless we book a computer lab in advance. SEIS school has two computer labs and two small mobile labs available. Unfortunately, at any given time, many computers in the labs are inoperable or cannot print. Our classroom also has a projector and an ELMO. These two features are very useful technologies as they allow for a various array of technologies to be displayed for the students.

Roosevelt High School is just outside St. John's. The neighborhood surrounding it is a mixed income neighborhood located in North Portland. The average house cost is \$250,000. It is an interesting neighborhood in transition. The racial makeup of North Portland varies widely depending on what neighborhood you are in. In the Boise neighborhood, 66% of the population is non-White, while close by in the Piedmont neighborhood, 45% of the population is non-White. Directly around Roosevelt in the University Park District, this number drops down to only 17% non-White. When you compare the community demographics to Roosevelt, you see that the racial composition of the school does not mirror the composition of the surrounding neighborhoods. This is due mostly to the gentrification and quickly changing demographics of the neighborhood. While in the past decade, North Portland has seen increased non-White populations

moving into the neighborhood, recent shifts in class makeup of the area has raised housing prices and cost of living and forced many of the poorer whites and people of color from the community. While most of the students at Roosevelt are lower middle class or poor, much of the neighborhood is being newly bought up by an influx of younger wealthy folks. Most of the new money comes in the form of couples without kids or kids that are not of school age yet. The changing demographics have taken its toll on Roosevelt by lowering its enrollment because of drop in school aged families and the rise in families that are sending their kids to alternative or private schools. This a story that is city-wide and creates a very noticeable disparity between affluent and struggling schools.