

A376_2016AbstractZimmerMorgen

Abstract

Language is the ever-changing, complex cord that ties people together. For human beings, there is no escaping it. The ways humans speak and communicate create a collective identity, feeling of comraderie, and security. As a white, English-speaking American teacher going into Navajo Nation to teach math and Language Arts in Spring 2016, I sought out relationships and experiences that would define for me the character of Navajo language. In school, I also sought to define the expectations placed on students for English Language Arts achievement. In looking at these two components of my students' daily lives and identities: their native, cultural language and the Common Core Language Arts standards, I found that there exists a dissonance or a gap between the two. The following chronicles my experiences, insights, and instructional strategies to combat the achievement gap as I lived and worked in Navajo Nation.

Honors College
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306