

Research Briefs: The Use of De Jure to Maintain a De Facto Status Quo

October 2013

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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Research Briefs: The Use of De Jure to Maintain a De Facto Status Quo" (2013). *Research Briefs*. 9.
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RESEARCH BRIEFS

October 2013

Georgia Southern College of Education

The Use of *De Jure* to Maintain a *De Facto* Status Quo

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Abstract

The vignette we use as the introduction in this article works to define and distinguish the concepts of *de jure* and *de facto* pedagogical actions, especially as related to culturally and linguistically different student populations, in particular Latina/o education, and its relationship with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. The authors assert that *de jure* educational policies, which are often legal guidelines that mandate minimum levels of compliance, have unfortunately become translated to mean the normative way to implement educational practice. Thus, it is imperative that educators in general and STEM educators in particular who work with linguistically diverse student populations and Latina/o learners demand that *de jure* education guidelines translated as *de facto* pedagogical actions are not enough. On the contrary, *de jure* and *de facto* ways of teaching and learning should always consist of a counterhegemonic normative.

Practical Application

Classroom teachers know that the demographics of their classrooms are changing. We believe that this change has made teaching and learning in general, and specifically in the STEM fields, such a complex endeavor that educators must settle for what they are required to do: ensuring their students perform well on standardized tests used for accountability measures. From a practical point of view, this defeats the purpose of education policy makers who are looking for a standardized measure of accountability but not a reduction of effort. On the other hand, policy makers must understand that all pedagogical acts are contextually and politically mitigated. An example of a contextually and politically mitigating factor (CPMF) is the pressure creationists put on science teachers to teach intelligent design. Educators simply do not have the skills necessary to deal with the myriad of influences they must negotiate on a daily basis. Pre-service and in-service teachers need help with this by investing in non-aseptic professional development efforts. These should be explicit about the myriad of CPMFs educators must deal with on a daily basis. Part of these CPMFs includes a diversity of learners that range from those in abject poverty to those who are emerging bilinguals. How can teacher education programs better prepare teachers and in particular science teachers for their work with culturally and linguistically diverse students? In sum, graduating teachers must demonstrate to administrators and school board members that they are capable of working with culturally and linguistically diverse students and emerging bilinguals.

Citation

Gallard Martinez, A.J., and Antrop-Gonzalez, R. (2013). The use of *de jure* to maintain a *de facto* status quo. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, 8(31), ISSN: 1871-1502 (print) 1871-1510 (online).

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