

## **Teachers As Agents of Change**

Provide an abstract that describes your proposed presentation. Please include descriptive sentences for use on the One Voice Conference website. Sessions are scheduled for 45 minutes each.

While participating in a course entitled *Diversity and Critical Pedagogy*, pre-service and practicing teachers were challenged to create a plan to become an agent of change in the educational system. Many agree that it is essential to challenge teachers to effect change. Fullan (1993) stated that “moral purpose and change agency are implicit in what good teaching and effective change are about, but as yet they are society’s great untapped resources...” (p.11).

A question remains: What do teachers believe they can change? In the spirit of teachers like Erin Gruwell, and critical pedagogists such as Kozol, McLaren, Freire, and Giroux; students engaged in a semester of learning the theories and actions of these “change” leaders, while also studying diversity and multicultural issues. The final paper of the semester challenged the students to become “agents of change”.

This presentation will discuss the ideas of change that these teachers created. Results were compiled over three semesters of classes. Participants were both practicing teachers and pre-service teachers. Data was examined for trends in responses and ideas. Some students’ plans were small classroom changes, while others had goals of making district, state and even national changes. Many of the plans focused on the teacher creating an environment where their students were challenged to move beyond the status quo and to not accept the system as it is, just as the participants had been challenged in this course.

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