

Reign of Error

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1
Explain what evidence Ravitch employs to argue that the entire reform effort is based on the false premise of systematic educational failure.

The evidence that Ravitch uses to prove that the entire reform effort is based on the false premise of systematic educational failure includes the legislation passed by Bush administration that said No Child Left Behind (NCLB). She noted that the Obama government national program called Race to the Top, that provides financial assistance to public schools have retained some negative features of the NCLB (Ravitch 2013, pg. 21). She argues that these programs set very high standards for pupils, make teachers lose their jobs because of their constant performance in tests and reprimand schools. Ravitch also talks about some Conjoint Basic Canons presently being embraced and executed in a mainstream of the states despite them not being field-tested. Regarding the supporters of denationalization and choice, Ravitch says that despite the money and political power they possess, they still lack a popular base. Therefore, it is like there is no democracy there altogether.

She cautions that among others, commercial activists, different tycoons and organizations such as the American Legislative Exchange Council are stirring for the denationalization of free education and triggering accumulative glitches in providing resilient schools that give every

student an opportunity of attaining excellent education. Furthermore, Ravitch states that the greatest discouraging feature of the present reorganization movements is its contempt for the teaching occupation since the mayors and governors in several states pursue non-educators or individuals with little learning understanding for leadership roles. She further says that some worse policies have been implemented in the educational sector because of these non-educators wrongly hired as state commissioner of education. She, therefore, cites that the claims made about Public Education being "broken" are false due to the wrong diagnosis as a result of worse policies implemented by corporate reformers (Ravitch 2013, pg. 21).

In general, Ravitch states that the solutions proposed by corporate reformers have failed, bringing a negative impact on education as a whole. She even criticizes their ideologies with detailed explanations to as why they are a failure and makes possible suggestions based on facts.

1
Explain what evidence Ravitch employs to argue that the reform effort is a back doorway by which to privatize schooling

The author uses various facts to back up his argument. He uses test scores, achievement gaps, high school and university graduation rates, and adverse effect of poverty on academic achievement. Ravitch also uses data about teachers and test scores, the problem with teaching for America, and the contradiction of charters, why merit pay fails and trouble in E-land amongst many others to prove that the reform effort is a back doorway to privatize schooling (p. 19). For instance, there are claims that test scores are falling, something that makes the education system outdated and broken, whereas **1** **the reality is that test scores are at their highest** points and performances in these public schools are improving. Additionally, there are claims that achievement gaps are getting larger and worse, a false assumption because genuine progress has

been made in narrowing the achievement gaps and that if nothing is done to narrow these gaps then they will remain large.

Also, claims were made that high school graduation rates are falling because of a dropout crisis experience nationwide. This is a false claim because dropout rates are decreasing substantially whereas high school graduation rates are increasing significantly. Concerning College graduation, claims are that the economy will be affected unless there is a high increase in college graduates, something that has no evidence. Moreover, it is further asserted ¹ that poverty is used as an excuse for ineffective teaching and failure in schools whereas the reality is that poverty highly relates to low performance because of lack of academic resources. Furthermore, the claim that teachers determine their students' performance in tests and that the marks scored by pupils are used to recognize and give awards to active educators and also to dismiss the unproductive ones is false. This is because using test scores to identify best teachers is ineffective as they cannot control their students' performances (Laukaitis pg. 21-31).

Another false claim is the one about Teach for America that says it solely recruit educators and leaders who will guarantee that each student receives quality education because of the high expectations that they hold. In reality, the organization sends young brilliant students to difficult classes thus they attain similar grades just like their fellows in these classes, with the only exception that these people from Teach for America leave the profession earlier. There is a further contradiction concerning charter schools as they are claimed to revolutionize American education with their independence and ability to innovate and produce dramatically better results whereas they are no better than public schools. About virtual learning, they are a poor substitute for real teachers and schools in contradiction to the claims about them ushering in a new age of educational excellence.

Generally, all the corporate reforms proposed to be implemented in the educational sector by doing away with public schools are false and therefore Ravitch is right by stating that they should be revisited. Also, she further states that the claims about Public Education being "broken" are all false and that with good solutions, U.S. public school education can be preserved and improved.

Evaluate her arguments and suggestions for improving public education.

Ravitch believes that public schools have room for improvement. She argues that the corporate reforms have no clear basis that certifies the eradication of public schools as she criticizes all the reforms by stating it is a way of monetizing the educational sector. She also states that public schools give equal opportunities to children of all social classes to get an education. Some of the suggestions she places forward about improving these schools include the State raising its standards for certifying teachers, by not accepting any qualifications attained online since to provide quality work, teachers require physical interaction and experience with their students. She says that society should insist on qualification on the part of those who teach and lead schools enrolling. In her opinion, constant enhancement is important if we are to have an excellent public education structure. Furthermore, Ravitch believes that having corporate schooling can help achieve quality education

Also, she suggests that early childhood education should be of high quality and made available to all children. This way, all children will have a good educational foundation that will help in their performances later on in their studies. Additionally, she advises that each school ought to have a filled, well-adjusted, and good program that includes every subject necessary for all students to assist in providing a good education. This is a good idea because every child is exposed to what he/she would like to focus on, and therefore it makes equal opportunities

available to all. Furthermore, the class sizes should be reduced so that students are closely monitored to improve performance and behavior. This suggestion seems like one that would work perfectly if implemented as teachers will have a close relationship with their students, something that will also make learning more effective as every student gets close feedback from their teacher.

Profit charters and charter chains should be banned and also it should be ensured that chartered schools work together with public schools to support better education for all children. If these two variations work together then every child will benefit because funds garnered from both the State and the private charters will enable the provision of more resources to public schools (Searson pg. 317-319). Ravitch (2013) also advocates for the provision of medical and social services to underprivileged children so that they are at par with their privileged peers and for achievable plans and explicit objectives to control poverty and ethnic discrimination. I believe this suggestion if implemented will help bridge a lot of gaps i.e. achievement gap and promote communal love and equality.

Generally, most of the suggestions put forward by Ravitch if implemented will help improve public schools and also ensure that children are provided with quality education. If public education is protected from privatization and saved for future generations, communities will be united and national success maintained.

Work Cited

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