A Critique of Ethnographic Research

But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

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Introduction

With the introduction of good teaching at schools, various administrators, educators have sought to use excellent pedagogy to develop student learning and academic success. Promising research suggests that using good teaching to identify the pedagogy as “culturally relevant” may help improve academic success of students who are not well served by their nation. What follows is a critique of “But That’s Just Good teaching The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy” (Gloria Ladson-Billings, 1995.)

The focus of the study was the impact of introducing pedagogy in action by looking at linkages between school and culture and the theoretical grounding of culturally relevant teaching. Working 3 years with successful teachers of African American students, the authors gathered information about schooling and culture, academic success, and cultural competence. Studying about students’ problems provided awareness of learners’ attitudes and motivation to achieve students’ outcome and maintain cultural integrity. The study’s overall success stems from the fruitful recommendation of students’ parents, their principals, their teachers and participation of them that is required an in-depth ethnographic interview using Spradley (1979) ‘unannounced classroom visitations, videotaping of their teaching, and participation in a research collective with the other teachers in the study’. To support the success of the program, numerous citations from parallel studies appear throughout this article. The culminating effect of the article is a questionably optimistic assertion that use of excellent pedagogy, and cultural competence develops students’ academic skills toward literacy, numeracy, technological, social, and political skills in order to be active participants in a democracy.
Approach / Methodology of the Study

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) use two approaches in an ethnographic study of good teaching. First, student observation provides insight into students’ attitudes toward culture and academic excellence. Second, teacher observations and teacher interviews provided data establishing a baseline of each student’s ability to express ideas, activity participation, and individual perspectives. In total, there were nine teachers participated in this study, eight teachers participated in the first two year, and the other one for the third year.

Analysis of Results & Concerns

Gloria Ladson-Billings, (1995) appear to have presented some biases in the essential design of their experiment. Foremost, the sample size and duration of the study call into question the validity of any results. It would seem more prudent to include more students and teachers in this study because the principle reason of recommending teachers were the high attendance rates, low number of discipline referrals, and standardized test scores and participation in the study. The obligation to prove this hypothesis demands several measure of quantitative analysis. Provided this, a bigger sample size could improve the reliability of the results, even for an ethnographic study. Furthermore, the large number of references cited in this study, endorsing the authors’ contention that good teaching and cultural competence, cannot balance for a time-limited and size-prohibitive study such as this. Another area of unease is the interpretation of the summary of student outcomes. It is clear that many students have to improve academic skills such as literacy, numeracy, technological, social, and political skills to join actively
in democracy. However, the analysis of these academic skills seems unsubstantiated without ensuring that which skill was the most meaningful to them. It is inadequate to claim a development without an objective look at student culture. In these concerns, the sample should have integrated more number of participants. Valuable data would be gained from this research. Provided that the authors selected eight teachers also calls into question the randomness of the sample. Plenty of studies use even numbers, or multiples of five since statistics may be used, and it is simpler to analyze these values. Moreover, because insufficient profile couldn’t present each student, socio-economic background, etc., it is challenging to provide possible contexts to explain the results of the study.

Summary

By and large, this study provides satisfactory insight into the effectiveness of good teaching use to improve student results. Even though the research methodology could be improved and clarified through additional experimentation, there is sufficient evidence to support the authors’ assertion that good teaching is valuable tools in writers’ education. This study would be repeated in a more quantitative fashion, rather than a larger sample size, randomly determined, profiling samples of student culture throughout the study. A profile for every student is also required to provide insight which could clarify differential results among students.