

Critical review



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Critical review Kenneth Tobin, Gale Seiler, and Mackenzie W Smith undertake an important interpretive study of the preparation of science teachers for urban high schools in “ Educating Science Teachers for Socio-cultural Diversity of Urban Schools”, in which the authors explore the extent to which the methods courses facilitated learning to teach. These three researchers undertook an exploration of learning to teach in a graduate teacher preparation program and they co-taught science in an urban high school in order to gain first hand grasp on the challenges of teaching African American students placed in a low track program of study. In the final outcome of the research, they incorporated “ rich perspectives gained from the teacher-researchers and theoretical frameworks associated with resistance, habits and learning to teach by co-teaching. The paper advocates co-teaching as an essential component of teacher education programs.” (Tobin, Seiler, and Smith, 1992, 69). Therefore, the study by Tobin, Seiler, and Smith highlights the several critical dilemmas that face teacher education programs in urban settings and others that are fairly more all-encompassing. This paper undertakes a critical review of the theoretical and methodological features of the study and main findings and conclusions in order to determine the various strengths and limitations of the study.

In a reflective exploration of “ Educating Science Teachers for Socio-Cultural Diversity of Urban Schools”, it becomes lucid that the researchers undertake an important area of study with regard to socio-cultural diversity in teaching environment. Significantly, the study attempts to bring out the conflict between theory and practice for the use of student teachers who learn to teach in urban schools. Based on the field experiences in a variety of urban placements, they come up with their practical conclusions about the aspects

that can best contribute to an effective teaching program in these schools. All through their study, they make the case for an approach to science teacher education, essentially based field studies and they provide some insights into the challenges of learning to teach science in urban schools as well as some suggestions for change. They also provide theoretical framework with regard to teaching as experience or practice. “ One way to characterize the problems we experienced with the methods course this semester is that so much of it involved talk and words, albeit in a context of ongoing daily student teaching experiences. This is one way to come to know about teaching and learning and to access new ideas. However, the knowledge needed to teach is of a different genre than what can be spoken and written.” (Tobin, Seiler, and Smith, 1992, 83). Thus, the researchers come up with some fundamental findings based on their field study and researchers.

However, the study lacks greatly in theoretical and methodological aspects and many often the researchers fail to present their findings and conclusions convincingly with evidences from their study as well as from the literature review. In their study, Tobin, Seiler, and Smith lacked awareness about an effective structure of such an investigation and they needed to improve the design of the study. Even in areas, where they present the findings of their research, they are not able to substantiate their arguments with solid evidences, save for the experience of each of the investigators. While they argue that the value of co-teaching and co-learning is clear, the readers are not able to easily grasp their point. It is mainly because the design of the study did not help the researchers to effectively convey the findings of their study. In conclusion, Tobin, Seiler, and Smith undertake an essential

investigation of the major ways of educating the science teachers for the socio-cultural diversity of urban schools and advocate co-teaching as an essential component of teacher education programs. The study could be improved by a more effective design of the study by presenting the theoretical and methodological aspects of the more convincingly.

Reference

Tobin, Kenneth., Seiler, Gale., and Smith, Mackenzie W. (1992). “ Educating Science Teachers for Socio-cultural Diversity of Urban Schools.” *Research in Science Education*. 29. (1). p. 69-88.