

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: A Cross-Cultural Comparison

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Abstract : The intent of this quantitative project was to compare the values and perceptions of students from a predominantly white college (PWI) to those from a historically black college (HBCU) about culturally relevant teaching and learning practices in the academic realm. The reason for interrelating student culture with teaching practices is to enable a pedagogical response to the low retention rates of African American students and first generation Caucasian students in high schools, colleges, and their low rates of social mobility and educational achievement. Culturally relevant pedagogy, according to related research, is deemed rewarding to students, teachers, the local and national community. Critical race theory (CRT) is the main framework used in this project to explain the ubiquity of a culturally relevant pedagogy. The purpose of this quantitative study was to test the critical race theory that relates the presence of the factors associated with culturally relevant teaching strategies with perceived relevance. The culturally relevant teaching strategies were identified based on the recommendations and findings of past research. Participants in this study included approximately 145 students from a HBCU and 55 students from the PWI. A survey consisting of 37 items related to culturally relevant pedagogy was administered. The themes used to construct the items were: Use of culturally-specific examples in class whenever possible; use of culturally-specific presentational models, use of relational reinforcers, and active engagement. All the items had a likert-type response scale. Participants reported their degree of agreement (5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) and importance (3-point scale ranging from not at all important to very important) with each survey item. A new variable, Relevance was formed based on the multiplicative function of importance and presence of a teaching and learning strategy. A set of six demographic questions were included in the survey. A consent form based on NIH and APA ethical standards was distributed prior to survey administration to the volunteers. Results of a Factor Analyses on the data from the PWI and the HBCU, and a ANOVA indicated significant differences on 'Relevance' related to specific themes. Results of this study are expected to inform educational practices and improve teaching and learning outcomes.

Keywords : culturally relevant pedagogy, college students, cross-cultural, applied psychology