Common Assignment

PSY 321, Educational Psychology

The Effects of Poverty on Students

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with opportunities to learn about the effects of poverty on the students at your school. This assignment consists of two parts.

1. Obtain background knowledge and collect data

A. Start by reading the article posted as a pdf file, “The Effects of Poverty on Children,” by Brooks-Gunn and Duncan. Also, go to the following websites:

* + <http://www.ncruralcenter.org/databank/trendpage_Poverty.asp>, “Poverty in North Carolina,” a website maintained by the North Carolina Economic Development Center.
  + <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/stats/>, “The North Carolina Public Schools  
    Statistical Profile” Go to the link, Statistical Profile for 2006 (a pdf file) and examine the information about the LEA (local education agency) in which your school is located.

These sources should give you ideas regarding questions you may ask your interviewees (see below).

B. Next, conduct structured interviews with two members of the faculty or staff at your school. One interview should be with your host teacher, the other can be with any other member of the faculty or staff at your school, from principal to bus driver. The interviews will focus on what the members of the faculty or staff at your school know about poverty in their area, the effects of poverty on students, what their school is doing to support students who live in poverty, etc.

Using the sources above (and any others you may have available to you), generate about 5 questions that you can ask each interviewee. PLEASE, do not limit your interview to these questions – use them to open up general areas of discussion with your interviewees.

General Procedures for Conducting Interviews

Try to hold the interviews in a room in which you will not be interrupted. It may be necessary to schedule a special time to conduct your interviews, a time other than that at which you typically do your field experience. It is important to schedule each interviews so that you and your interviewees can talk for about 30 uninterrupted minutes. You should either audio tape the interviews (with your interviewees’ permission) or take brief notes during the interview.

2. Analysis and Conclusions

A. Analyze what you have learned from this activity. Suggestions: Look at the data you collected and compare it to the information from your interviews. Do they “fit”?

* Are the teachers and other school personnel aware of the issue of poverty in general?
* Are they aware of the statistics associated with your specific area and school district?
* How did they indicate that they responded to the issue? To the students? To the families?
* How realistic were the ideas they had regarding how they might respond to a child living in poverty?

B. Conclusions: What have you learned from this activity?

* What will you do (or not do) to address this issue when you are in the schools?
* What role do you believe the teachers/school personnel/school/district should play?
* Has this activity changed the way you feel about individuals in poverty or your reaction to it? If yes, how? If no, please explain.

In your report indicate, **without giving a name**, the professional positions of your interviewees and some basic biographical data, such as years of experience, gender, and cultural background. As you talk with your interviewees, it might be necessary to probe him or her with additional questions in order to obtain a complete, thoughtful response.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Above Standard** | **At Standard** | **Below Standard** | **Unsatisfactory** |
| PSY 321 Common Assignment | Followed directions for assignment carefully. Addresses all questions and analysis is consistent with the data collected from interviews, statistics, and readings. Goes beyond the obvious in analysis but paper is consistent with data and perceptive. Links findings from previous learning. | Followed directions for assignment carefully. Addresses all questions and analysis is generally consistent with the data collected from interviews, statistics, and readings. | May omit some parts of the assignment or fail to address one or more questions. Analysis may not be entirely consistent with data collected. Analysis could be more thorough and comprehensive. | Major components of assignment are missing or significantly below quality standards for the level of the course. |