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Qualitative Research
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Article Critique

“The Department is Very Male, Very White, Very Old, and Very Conservative in Graduate Sociology Departments” by Eric Margolis and Mary Romero

This article examined what the authors called a “hidden curriculum” and its effect on women of color in a sociology doctoral program. The authors conducted a qualitative study and used interviews as their primary research method. The process uncovered the inequalities in several graduate sociology programs located throughout the United States. At the same time inequalities in gender, race and class were also uncovered. This research helped to “lift the veil to make visible what was hidden.”

This article describes the research that made visible “what the students and faculty tacitly agreed not to see.” The authors did a great job of using existing research as a springboard for their research. Philip Jackson’s (1968) concept of a “hidden curriculum” was used. He developed his research through observations in K-12 public schools. It described, in essence, a type of “Emperor with no clothes” scenario. The research was thorough and included their finding in the following areas:

“Blaming the Victim”
Stereotyping
Absence
Deafening Silences
Exclusion
Tracking

I enjoyed reading this article and found it to be very revealing. As I read the article, I questioned the limited number of the students that were interviewed. A total of 26 women of color enrolled in various doctoral programs throughout the United States were questioned. I have since learned that this number is acceptable for this type of research.

Extensive references were listed which made evident the breadth and depth of their research. A “hidden curriculum” was revealed as a result of their research. The authors concluded with suggestions for future research and specific strategies for achieving equity in education.