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Debate Reflection

After the debate I still support the viewpoint of Ruby Payne and the pro side of the debate. I was on the pro side as a debater and after hearing our side of the debate and the con’s side argument, I still firmly believe in the work of Ruby Payne. It was interesting to hear both sides and the facts and opinions behind the arguments, but it was also interesting to hear how everyone actually felt after the debate was over. I was unsure how I was going to feel once the debate was over, just because I had read both sides of information going into it and could see both sides of the argument. I ultimately decided to stay on the pro side because I believe Ruby Payne’s work could prove to be very helpful in the future and used as a framework for teachers all across the nation.

Throughout the debate, it was highly argued that Payne’s work did not have any statistics to go along with the statements she presented. I do not disagree with this argument. I realize that her book isn’t composed of numbers and analysis of statistics. I think Payne meant to do this in a way. In my opinion, I would not want to sit down and read a book solely based on statistics. I would stop reading after the first chapter. I believe Payne was trying to come up with a way to convey to teachers a different learning style that they would be interested in. I don’t think she intended for teachers to use her framework as their *only* guide or resource as an educational approach when working with children in impoverished areas. The con side also highly argued that many of her remarks were biased and her tactics were based upon assumptions. To an extent, I agree with their argument, but I also think that Payne was just trying to make a valid point. I think that most of her book is based upon opinion, but in most scenarios I agreed with her opinions. For example, Payne discussed how teachers have to be children’s primary motivators. This is because most parents living in poverty do not have the time or the energy to motivate their children about education. She is not saying they do not care, she is just stating they have to spend their time doing other things like thinking about how they’re going to get their next meal or afford rent next month. In addition, there were many instances where the other side argued that Payne was stereotyping about children coming from low-income families. I do not agree with this stance at all. I believe that Payne has put the time in to observe the nature of classrooms in impoverished communities and I believe she has made this framework based upon these observations. For instance, I think that Payne is right in the fact that teachers should be teaching children professional dialect with a direct method of teaching. Although it is unfortunate that casual dialect is not accepted in the professional world, it is the way society is. I believe it is not fair for children to grow up being oblivious to this. I also think that the other side highly argued that Payne made many generalizations. I think that she did, but I do not believe she intended for all teachers to use learning styles like the ones she proposed. I believe that in some classrooms they would be useful, especially in classrooms composed of children living at or below the poverty line. Payne isn’t saying that impoverished children are intelligent, she is just conveying that many of them may need to be taught in a different way with focus in different areas.