

# From social class and the hidden curriculum of work assignment

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Jared Disidore Dr. Kara M. Ryan-Johnson English 1113-392 10 September 2011 "From Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work" In "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work", Jean Anyon discusses the differences in schooling between the working class and the higher up, executive class. She asserts that opportunities to gain valuable knowledge and skills to succeed are more readily available to the advantaged class, while the lower working class is given a more basic curriculum. Her article gives thorough evidence to support these beliefs via a study of five elementary schools.

She first talks about the different types of schools that took part in the study. Two of the schools were working-class schools. In these schools, the work is very procedural, and the reason behind why students are being given the work is rarely given. Their work is given in steps, and they are taught more to follow the directions than to actually do the work correctly. No matter the subject, the method of teaching is, as Anyon describes it, mechanical. Also, the teachers were in full control of the classroom. They made all of the decisions, no matter what the children wanted to do, and rarely explained why these decisions were being made.

They were very strict and controlling, and the students had no control. There was also a middle class school. This school was much different than the working class, because getting the right answer got you a good grade. Their curriculum is slightly more open, and they have more freedom to figure out the answer and make some decisions. Most classes go by the book, which the teachers explain, but don't really analyze the material. There is little

creativity involved in the work, which is usually limited to written assignments, which makes school very dull for the students.

Also observed in the experiment was an affluent professional school. The affluent school has creative work unlike the other two types, but they do it independently. They are expected to express ideas and thoughts. Choosing methods and illustrating ideas are a big part of the curriculum as well. The work done by the students in class holds great value to not only them, but to the teachers as well. Teacher-student relationship in the classroom is very relaxed. Most of the orders given involve negotiation, unless the teacher is angry. The students have some say of what happens in class, because the teacher allows negotiation.

Seeing the consequences of your actions beforehand is also stressed by the teacher. Finally, there was an executive elite school that was sampled. In this school, the work is meant to build the students' analytical powers.

Students are given a problem, and then are asked to analyze the problem and come up with a solution. The work given to them is meant to help them prepare for life. Teachers in the schools try to keep control over the class, but if the students get out of hand, the teachers simply remind the students that they control their own fate.

The students are highly trusted, and have freedoms that students at the other schools don't have. For example, they don't have to sign out of class, they can just get up and leave. The students were treated with respect, like they were adults. Anyon goes on to conclude that the class of the student does, in fact, determine the type of work given to them. The experience,

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curriculum, and treatment by the faculty in each school corresponded to the social class of the students, and helped prepare them for the type of job they would likely have in the future.