

The comparison of functionalism and conflict theory essay sample

[Education](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Functionalism and conflict theory are two theories that influence the purposes of schooling. These two theories are both different and similar in their view and relation to schooling. Basically, the differences lie in the way these two theories explain transmission, as well as way functionalists are more accepting and conflict theorists want to change things. The two theories are similar in their views of structure and culture.

“ Functionalism...argues that society operates as does the human body: Like living organisms, all societies possess basic functions which they must carry out to survive. Like living organisms, they evolve structures to carry out the functions” (Bennett deMarais and LeCompte, p. 5). Functionalism is a theory that certainly concentrates more on the social aspects and cultural aspects more than any other areas within the schooling systems. Based upon these two aspects, functionalists will try to recognize the social system. From there, functionalists explain how the school systems operate, while at the same time keeping order and equilibrium preserved.

Functionalists focus on intellectual, political, economical, and social purposes as what they perceive as the purposes of schooling. The intellectual purposes of schooling according to functionalists are learning and applying cognitive, substantive, and inquiry skills throughout their childhoods and on into their adulthoods. The functionalist view also states that the political purposes of schooling include educating children to become adults in this world that participate in politics, promote sharing history, encourage immigration, and are people who make sure order and obeying laws come into play. Economically, functionalists feel that schooling prepares children for their careers in life and also to choose and instruct the labor force. Lastly, <https://assignbuster.com/the-comparison-of-functionalism-and-conflict-theory-essay-sample/>

functionalists believe that the social purposes of schools are to encourage social and moral responsibility, become places for people to solve social problems, and to become another place to go for help besides church and family.

Functionalists view the world as though everyone has a part in the system and everyone has to do their part in order for it all to work. The way they believe is each generation passes down the ways of behavior and those ways are accepted as the normal ways of life. The functionalist is more accepting of the way things are in society and portray that to be the normal way of life.

While learning these “ normal ways of life,” children are educated within the school systems. Although functionalists are very accepting of the things around them, functionalists see schools as the stepping stone for children to grow into their adulthood. Without schools, children would not know how to become adults in this manner, because school is where they learn how to become intellectually, politically, economically, and socially ready for the world, while at the same time not showing any sort of conflict and accepting of the things around them and the ways in which they are done.

Conflict theory is similar in the way functionalists think and feel. However, “ they believe that functional analysis, with its emphasis on social equilibrium and maintenance of existing patterns, was inadequate to explain the dynamism of social was systems” (Bennet DeMarrais and LeCompte, p. 11). Conflict theorists believe that there are differences shown in the school systems when it comes to social, cultural, and gender differences.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-comparison-of-functionalism-and-conflict-theory-essay-sample/>

Conflict theory is more focused on the relationship between schools, and the social and economic statuses of those involved. They feel the standard has been set for the dominant cultures, social status, economic status, and gender. Conflict theorists also believe that instead of accepting things as normal like the functionalists do, there are aspects of society that can be changed, and they do so through reproduction.

The purposes of schooling are the same for conflict theorists as functionalists, although, conflict theorists believe they can change the things that functionalists believe are normal. Conflict theorists usually want to do something to change the inequalities they see within the school systems today. “ Conflict theorists employ three models to explain how schools promote inequality and perpetuate class distinction—economic reproduction, cultural reproduction, and hegemonic state reproduction” (Bennet DeMarrais and LeCompte, p. 13).

Conflict theorists have a more critical attitude than functionalists. This is because functionalists are far more accepting of things as normal, and conflict theorists believe that they can change things. Overall, conflict theorists feel that the dominant social classes are more catered to in their needs. “ They are concerned primarily with how schools serve the interests of dominant groups by replicating the existing social class structure and maintaining the division of labor necessary for a society stratified by class, ethnicity, and gender” (Bennett DeMarrais and LeCompte, p. 20).

The school system today is run in more of a functionalist way. The generational aspect is one that is perceived throughout the system. Most of

everything that is seen within the school systems is done without thought or compensation to the different scenarios that each class or child is put in.

The school system today is very accepting of the ways things were done from generation to generation past, because it seems to be the easy way out. It is probable that the school system is run in this manner in order to keep things the same, allowing the leadership to do less work and just go by the standards of whatever has been done in the previous years.

Also seen in today's school system are the aspects of intellectual, political, economical, and social purposes. The focus is still on those main points and possibly will always be on those points because they are what allow a child to grow up to be a well-rounded, strong individual. This progression within the child into adulthood starts in school from the youngest age on up to adulthood. Although the functionalist view might not be best for today's society, it just seems to be the way the school system is being run as of now.