

Differences in socioeconomic status assignment



Sandra Jones Socioeconomic class is dependent on a variety of social and financial factors. I will only discuss three factors from our reading assignment that relate to socioeconomic class. Probably the most important factor is yearly family salary. The yearly salary varies greatly from one family to the next at our local school. The difference in salaries between families causes issues between the students. A good example of this is the upcoming school dance. Kids from high income families will go to this dance dressed in the finest attire.

For example many of these kids may choose to attend the dance in a tuxedo. These are typically rented at great expense. Kids from the low income families will not be able to afford a tuxedo. In fact, for many low income families jeans and a T shirt may be the only option. This is embarrassing to the kids. It may be the case that many of the poor kids will opt out of the dance. If they do attend, they will be ridiculed for standing next to someone in a tuxedo while wearing jeans and a T shirt. In the end the rich kids get all of the benefits. Another factor that affects socioeconomic status is wealth.

Wealth is not income, but it is related. Wealth is more like an attitude or a lifestyle or a set of expectations. Wealthy families will teach their children how to acquire and maintain financial power. Wealthy families will also teach their children how to use these to influence people. Families with less wealth, lead different lifestyles. The struggle for survival can be so intense that it's not about power and influence for these families, it's just about survival. No wonder that children from these families feel insecure at school when they are around the wealthier children.

A third factor that affects socioeconomic status is power. Obviously wealthy families are more powerful than poor families. For example, they may require that students only wear tuxedos to the dance. They may be able to get away with it, because some wealthy parents sit on the school boards, or some of them may contribute sizeable sums of money to the football team. If tuxedos are not worn at the dance, maybe the football team can't afford uniforms, or maybe the school board will not get enough votes to add that new wing to the school. Wealthy people wield power in this way.

These strategies are simply not accessible to poor people. The schools can do something about this situation. They could, for example, require that a suit is the fanciest thing that can be worn at the dance. If this rule is broken consequences will ensue. Furthermore, students would have to be driven by their parents. Limos are not allowed. If the school spent more time setting policies similar to these then the disparity between the rich and the poor would not be so great at school. Reference Goggling, D. , & Chain, P. (2006). Multicultural education in a pluralistic society Upper Saddletree, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall