

Rhetorical analysis summary essay



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Rhetorical Analysis: Jean Anyon, Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work Jean Anyon is a professor of educational policy in the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She wrote this essay for the Journal of Education in 1980 with the main audience being professional educators.

Through this essay she portrays his observations of five elementary schools in which he concluded, over a full school year, that fifth graders of different economic backgrounds are already being prepared to occupy particular rungs on the social ladder.

There are three types of schools: working-class, middle-class, and affluent professional. Anyon begins by giving us general stereotypes of each of the “classes”; statistics and average income of families of different social status. In working-class families with low social or economic status, the children are more likely to become assembly line operatives, auto mechanics, and stockroom workers. These children are taught in a very mechanical way, one thing after another simply to retain the necessary requirements to graduate.

They are not given any chance for thought or constructive change, just one thing after another. Steps are given to reach the answers and the kids have to copy everything exactly the way the teacher does or they will be considered wrong without a second thought. This is what is known as working-class, in which Anyon places the first two schools. In this type of schooling “approximately 15 percent of the families in each school are at or below the federal “poverty” level; most of the rest of the family incomes are at or below \$12, 000. (ANYON 172) I can’t say one way or the other to these statement because I have never experienced or seen poverty first hand but I can empathize with this situation. In middle-class families or “middle

management” “ the population is a mixture of several social classes. ”

(ANYON 172) This type of schooling teaches kids that there is only one right answer or way to do things. “ If one accumulates enough right answers, one gets a good grade. ” (ANYON 176) The teachers give the children time to explain their ideas and choices on how they do their work but the answers have to match the teachers or the books.

Read also Rhetorical Analysis in the article “ Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder; Body Image; Skinny on a Weighty Issue”.

The children in these schools are being set up to be placed in a range of jobs such as, plumbers, policemen, teachers, and accountants. The roles that these children will be placed into will be good jobs to sustain a family, but only to live without need; there will still be struggles with bills and paying for college. This class is the glue that holds society together, the workers that come out of the education this role provides are well rounded people; they get both the hardships and luxuries of both extreme schools.

The last grouping of status is the affluent professional schools, “ approximately 90 percent of the children in this school are white. ” And “ Most family incomes are between \$40, 000 and \$80, 000. ” (ANYON 172) These children are most likely to become doctors, lawyers, and designers. The teaching style of these schools is relaxed but structured; the teachers expect the very best of students but give free reign. It is geared towards project based learning styles, where the children are given a task and a direction in which to go but they can choose the way they go about it.

This provides the children with their own thinking skills, through trial and error, on how to get things done and to do them right to the best standards. Children from this class are the law makers, and the people the other two groups strive to become. Through this education, a life of gratification and indulgence comes into being. The title for this essay, Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work, fits perfectly for the explanations given in the work. There is indeed a hidden agenda within the school systems according to class.

Anyon states her claims very clearly; it is easy to follow the ideas and information given about each type of school. Most of the population today is considered middle-class; although the number of unemployed workers rises we still find a way, as families, to stay afloat. It is sad however that, through the school systems, we are set up to be successful or just mediocre in our life goals. Schools should give all children an equal chance at an education that will get them far in life.