

# **LA 3.5: Article - Summary of Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work**

**Anyon, J. (1981). In H. A. Giroux, A. N. Penna, & W. F. Pinar (Eds.), Curriculum & instruction: Alternatives in education.**

## **Theme:**

Anyon's article gives empirical support for the notion that schools in industrial societies offer students from different social classes different types of educational experiences, knowledge, and future work opportunities. This implies that there is a hidden curriculum which prepares students from different social classes for class-specific roles in the dominant society.

## **Methodology:**

The study used an ethnographic approach to study curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation practices in five elementary schools.

## **Prior Assumptions:**

1. Working-class students are prepared for jobs that are routine and mechanical in nature.
2. Upper class students are prepared for jobs in the larger society that demand creativity and the skills necessary for a self-managed existence.

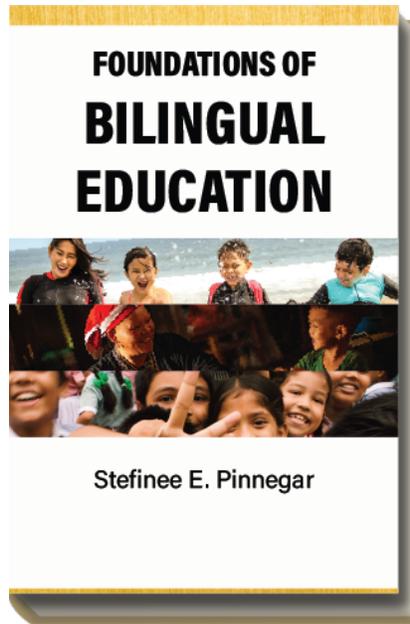
## **Social class is defined in terms of:**

1. Ownership relationships (capital—physical and symbolic)
2. Relationships between people (authority and control at work and in society; control of content, process and speed of work; how money is used and how profit is allocated)
3. Relationship between people and their work (how much control you have over what you do, creativity and conceptualization)

## **Conclusions:**

1. *Working-class kids are developing a conflict relationship with capital:* “They are developing abilities and skills of resistance. These methods are highly similar to the ‘slowdown,’ subtle sabotage, and other modes of indirect resistance carried out by adult workers in the shop, on the department store sales floor, and in some offices” (p. 337).
2. *Middle-class students’ relationship to capital is bureaucratic:* “. . . jobs that involve paperwork, technical work, sales and social services in bureaucracies. Their work is not necessarily creative, and you are not often rewarded for critical analysis of the system. One is rewarded for knowing where or how to find answers, and for knowing which form, regulation, technique, or procedure is correct” (p. 338).
3. *Affluent student’s relationship to capital is instrumental and expressive and involves substantial negotiation.* They acquire symbolic capital, the skills of linguistic, artistic and scientific expression; and are creative and relatively autonomous (artists, intellectuals, legal, scientific and technical experts).
4. *Executive elite school:* Elite students gain knowledge of and practice in manipulating the socially legitimated tools of analysis of systems. This knowledge is important for gaining symbolic capital and prepares students with abilities necessary in ownership and control of physical capital.

“In the contribution to the reproduction of unequal social relations lies a theoretical meaning and social consequence of classroom practices” (p. 339).



Pinnegar, S. E. (2019). *Foundations of Bilingual Education*. EdTech Books.  
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