

Education

Neutralizing Social Inheritance in America Schools

Friday 8:00 am; Panel 3

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Abstract: This paper examines how cultural capital permeates the school experience and what can be done to make the classroom more class neutral. Childrearing, class position and school readiness are linked to school achievement. Culturally enriched children get richer culturally and those who are culturally poor are more challenged academically in school. Pierre Bourdieu called this transfer of cultural capital the “reproduction process.” Families and schools unwittingly replicate existing class positions, albeit with some exceptions. Poor African American families are often unaware of the social damage they are inflicting on their children. Most poor parents expect the schools to compensate for their cultural capital deficits. Research shows that schools do not always succeed. The paper also explores how social inheritance of affluent children can be neutralized in the classroom.