Jean Anyon – A Qualitative Post-Positivist Study

A little over 30 years ago educational sociologist Jean Anyon described a phenomenon she observed in American schools as the “hidden curriculum.” In an essay in titled *Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work* she described how the curricula of schools are often based on the socioeconomic class of the students who attend these schools. These results, she believed, showed how the unwritten and unarticulated (“hidden”) curriculum differed in schools based on the goal of maintaining the advantage of those in the more advantaged classes while restricting the social mobility of other students. The idea is important and the research strategy particularly interesting in that she draws generalizable conclusions about objective facts while using interview techniques to gather her data. After reading this rather long piece think about how we would classify it these days. What is the world-view (paradigm) adopted by Jean Anyon in this study?

Peter Ramsey, a New Zealand educational researcher, takes these findings to task suggesting that Anyon’s data gathering and data analysis techniques are faulty and certainly cannot be generalized in Australia. This was the beginning of a serious discussion among educators about race and class based expectations and the role of education and schools in opening up wider alternatives to all students. We are still having this discussion today, particularly in Florida.

Read, enjoy, and consider!

LBB