

Multi-Cultural Education within a Pluralistic Society



Chapter 2: Class

**“Class is a system that differentially structure group access to economic, political, cultural, and social resources.”
(Anderson & Collins, 2004)**

**There is a large dichotomy
between those who control most
of the resources and those who
have few resources.**

*Herein lies the class
struggle.*

Most people are caught in the socioeconomic strata in which they were born, and the political - economic system insures they remain there. *In this view, family background determines educational and economic attainment.*

Social stratification

ranks individuals and families on the basis of their income, education, occupation, wealth, and power in society.

Ascribed status is one's assignment to groups at birth. It affects who is allowed entrance into the higher-ranking socio-economic position.

Socio-economic status is a measure composite of the economic status of a family/unrelated individuals on the basis of occupation, educational attainment, and income.

**Income and Wealth -
the top fifth of the
population owns 48% of
the wealth; the bottom
fifth of the population
owns 4% of the income.**

**Income sets limits on
the general lifestyle of
a family.**

**Income refers to
wages or salary
earned.**

**Between W.W.II and 1973
income of workers
increased at a faster pace
than expenditures. The
median income rose for all
classes especially the
middle class.**

Wealth is the net worth of a family savings accounts, insurance policies, real estate, and stock ownership. The majority of wealth comes from the equity value of homes.

**The wealthiest 10% of
the population is
worth 1.3million; the
bottom 10% is worth
1,100. (2001)**

Wealth ensures economic security, enhances power and prestige, allows luxury, creates values and lifestyles. Children from families of higher SES have advantages (finishing schools, travel, legal representation) that children from families of lower SES levels don't have.

Occupation:

Fair measure of occupational success.
It's an indicator of SES status.

**Occupations requiring
more education and
training are more
prestigious and
entrance is more
difficult.**

Occupations with limited training have low status of is wide open and entrance is more accessible.

Education:

Way to enhance economic status:

- The higher SES level of students' families, the greater the students' chances of finishing high school and college.
- The college one attends is influenced by family's SES.
- Student's SES origins have substantial influence on the amount and type of schooling received thus impacting on the job obtained.
- Education is one of the main ways families pass on class position to their children.

Power:

Individuals in the upper SES levels exert more power:

- Sit on boards - state/local politics
- Boards of colleges and universities and corporations
- More likely to vote thus controlling the resources.
- Powerless groups obtain fewer of society's benefits.

Power Relationships Exist Between Teachers and Students

- Curriculum is controlled by teachers, school boards, and administrators.
- In high income schools, parents have more power (better resources such as more technology and fine arts programs, incompetent staff is not tolerated.)

There are two views of equality in U.S. society to suggest different class structures:

- One view accepts the notion of classes -strongly supporting social mobility to a higher class by obtaining an education and hard work.
- Opportunities for social mobility are limited - privileged upper-class control legislative representation to support their needs.