Country Day Schools and Juvenile Detention:

Where U.S. Schooling Can Lead To or Leave You

by

Eftyhia Theodoropoulos

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Eric Margolis, Chair
Kathryn Nakagawa
Nicholas Appleton

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine compulsory schooling in the United States and its potential to provide an inconsistent avenue to employment for students from neighborhoods of differing socioeconomic status. Specifically, this study asked why do students from privileged neighborhoods typically end up in positions of ownership and management while those from impoverished urban or rural neighborhoods end up in working-class positions or involved in cycles of incarceration and poverty? This research involved the use of qualitative methods, including participant observation and interview, as well as photography, to take a look at a reputable private day school in the southwest. Data was collected over the span of eight weeks and was then analyzed and compared with preexisting data on the schooling experience of students from impoverished urban and rural neighborhoods, particularly data focused on juvenile detention centers. Results showed that compulsory schooling differs in ways that contribute to the preexisting hierarchical class structure. The research suggests that schooling can be detrimental to the future quality of life for students in impoverished neighborhoods, which questions a compulsory school system that exists within the current hierarchical class system.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father for their continued support and love and also to my brothers, who are the best. It is also dedicated to Elias Camou, who is too smart for his own good. I hope that he one day puts his critical perspective to good use. I also dedicate this thesis to the superb chair of my committee, Eric Margolis, who has made me realize the potential in academia.

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INTRODUCTION

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights demands that, "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit…" (Article 26).

Compulsory education is valued by progressive educators not only as a privilege, but as a human right held by every individual, a cause to crusade for. Despite the fact that this "human right" is already available, free of cost, to children in their "fundamental stages" in the United States, this education looks different for students in different neighborhoods and provides different outlets for employment upon graduation/drop out depending upon the location and status of the school. As argued by Jean Anyon in *Social Class and School Knowledge*, "…in advanced industrial societies such as Canada and the U.S., where the class structure is relatively fluid, students of different social class backgrounds are still likely to be exposed to qualitatively different types of educational knowledge" and furthermore that, "…such social class differences in secondary and postsecondary education are a conserving force in modern societies, an important aspect in the reproduction of unequal class structures" (Anyon, 1981, 2).

The fact that schooling is compulsory is important to emphasize since the compulsory schooling experience can prove to be detrimental to the future quality of life for many students, especially those from a lower socio-economic status. I

will argue that the compulsory schooling experience has potential to impede some students from receiving an education that is beneficial to their development and growth as individuals and can have negative implications to the future lives of students from impoverished urban and rural neighborhoods. This is due to the fact that not only is the educational experience differentiated to train those students from poor families to work in working-class positions, but in the existing post-industrial U.S. society, this differentiation also leads many of those students to become a part of the steadily increasing prison population.

This study will address schooling and how it functions to provide an inconsistent avenue to employment for students from neighborhoods of differing socioeconomic status. Students from impoverished urban and rural neighborhoods continue to become employed in working-class jobs or end up involved in the criminal justice system. Resorting to criminal activity can often lead to cycles of incarceration and poverty. Opposing this experience is that of the schooling experienced by children from privileged neighborhoods. These children tend to graduate into positions of ownership and management, which typically follows a postsecondary educational experience.

This study will specifically explore the differences in the schooling environment experienced by students from varying socioeconomic status and how these differences have the potential to contribute to the inconsistencies in their eventual employment, or lack thereof. This point is supported by substantial evidence from previous works by educational theorists such as Jean Anyon,

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Jonathan Kozol, Paul Willis etc., and will be explored in detail in the literature review.

Although the lack of success for students from a lower socioeconomic background, which has been referred to as the achievement gap, has received much research attention, and schools in impoverished areas are very popular "data plantations" for educational researchers, the problem outlined above persists. This creates a need for further research and new approaches to the problem. My thesis considers the notion that schools in impoverished urban and rural areas denigrate the potential of their students and do not foster self-actualization and the characteristics that lead to autonomy. Further, I will attempt to demonstrate that schools are not simply a place where knowledge can be acquired in a sterile, equal fashion. Rather, schools continue to perpetuate the systematic recreation of social class through schooling.

Additionally, I emphasize the developing issue of the increased involvement of the juvenile corrections system in impoverished urban and rural educational settings juxtaposed to the privileged educational experiences of students at one prevalent private southwestern day school. More and more, school failure has begun to go hand in hand with incarceration. As McGrew (2008) points out, "…too little scholarship has addressed the ways that increasingly punitive laws, racially and economically disproportionate law enforcement, and massive increases in incarceration are affecting public education and the lives of many of the young people with whom teachers work… young people from poor

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families, for a myriad of reasons, are increasingly more likely to spend a great deal of their lives in jails and prisons" (McGrew, 2008, 1).

It is problematic that the majority of students from privileged neighborhoods benefit from their educational experiences, in that they graduate into high-class positions while students from impoverished urban and rural neighborhoods end up in working class positions or involved with the criminal justice system.

Personal Statement

As quoted in *The Qualitative Doctoral Dissertation Proposal*, Eisner noted that "Each person's history, and hence world, is unlike anyone else's. This means that the ways in which we see and respond to a situation, and how we interpret what we see, will bear our own signature. This unique signature is not a liability but a way of providing individual insight into a situation" (Kilbourn, 2006, 547).

I have had a lot of experience working with schools in differing locations. I was a substitute teacher in my small hometown in Connecticut, as well as in the city of Boston. I taught in my own classroom, at varying grade levels, in the city of Phoenix, Arizona for three years with a state issued emergency teaching certificate. All these teaching positions were in Title I schools. Additionally, I worked as a teacher's assistant in a Montessori school in an affluent neighborhood in Phoenix, Arizona. Prior to teaching, I individualized my undergraduate studies to create a focus on how social inequalities affect educational opportunities. I

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also participated in the teacher certification program through Rio Salado College in Phoenix, Arizona while teaching with my emergency certification. With these unique educational experiences, I gained the practical background to take a critical look at the various educational settings that I was employed in. In pursuing the Masters degree in the Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education I focused my studies on critical theory.

As I engaged in the day-to-day work environment, the concept of this thesis began to form. Through my various positions, I observed vast differences in the educational experiences of students based on the socioeconomic settings of each school. The literature that I had read, both in my undergraduate years and independently, helped me to solidify, internally, the focus of my potential graduate level thesis work. I applied to my graduate program with a list of literature in mind and a clear purpose for my thesis work.

The final piece of the puzzle, or element, of my thesis, was brought to light to me by the son of a close friend. This son, Elias, was a student in the impoverished urban school district of Phoenix that I was also employed in during my graduate studies. Over dinner one evening, the conversation shifted to the topic of Elias's experiences with what he called "racist teachers". He described to me a situation where the assignment at hand was "too boring to do" and Elias, who was in the fifth grade at the time, decided to create a T-chart comparing school to prison instead. The teacher, an "old white lady tired of teaching", confiscated the T-chart and used it as documentation of Elias' behavioral problems in school. As a teacher myself, I would have responded much

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differently. The point is that Elias is a very smart student. Any teacher who invested time in this child would understand that he has gifted elements and should be routed towards an educational setting that would cater to his creativity and unique perspective and love for music and art. Instead, Elias's unique personality and intelligence only helped him to rack up a record of misbehaviors that often landed him in situations with administration. The route that Elias was put on is similar to that of many young students in Title I schools in poor neighborhoods. Elias is a very insightful young man who recognizes, at a deep level, what most college-educated teachers in most classrooms often glaze over. As a student in a poor neighborhood, school is often a path towards prison. The fact that a 10 year old can understand this connection made me realize the relevance of bringing in the element of incarceration into my thesis study.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The School Myth

"Education...beyond all other devices of human origin, is a great equalizer of
conditions of men --the balance wheel of the social machinery...It does better than
to disarm the poor of their hostility toward the rich; it prevents being poor."

-- Horace Mann

Horace Mann was the most prominent proponent for compulsory public
schooling. Along with many other advocates, such as Henry Barnard and Maria
Montessori, he fought for the creation of a public school system in the name of
equal opportunity for all regardless of social class background. Such a mission
correlated with the general American perspective on schooling, one that prevails
to this day, as articulated by Morales and Trottman, " The process by which
people are able to 'beat the odds' has been an American fascination since the
United States was first established. Stories of great journeys, with great obstacles
and outcomes, have always been a major theme in American thought, culture, and
philosophy. In recent years, formal education has been anointed the primary
means by which Americans should attempt to climb the social and economic
ladders" (Morales & Trotman, 2004, 2).

At the turn of the 19th century, the common-school movement had a
similar ideological outlook and argued that compulsory education would create

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good citizens, help eliminate poverty and lower crime rates and the need for imprisonment. This was a period of great debate and there is much written at the time on the topic of the benefits of public schooling for the common good. Joseph White of the Massachusetts Board of Education writes, "The children of the rich and the poor, the honored and the unknown, meet together on common ground. Their pursuits, their aims and aspirations are one. No distinctions find place, but such as talent and industry and good conduct create… Thus a vast and mutual benefit is the result. Thus, and only thus, can the rising generations be best prepared for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a free commonwealth". He goes on to say that, "No foundation will be laid in our social life for the brazen walls of caste…" (Rist, 1973, 3). It is clear that the moral mission set forth by these early proponents of free public schooling was a worthy cause to fight for. Who would argue against opportunity and social mobility via education? Education was something once reserved for the children of the upper class. Compulsory public school advocates aimed to bring education to all peoples. This movement did not move forward without opposition, as I will explore in the following section.

The school myth, or what schooling is said to do for society and its students, was in existence since the foundation of public schooling. This myth is still prevalent today. There is an excellent description of the general assumption of what an education can provide under "Sociology of Education" on the online encyclopedia known as Wikipedia. This description echoes the above sentiment

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towards schools and is therefore of value to note since it offers a modern

mainstream perspective. Wikipedia states that:

> Education has always been seen as a fundamentally optimistic human endeavor characterized by aspirations for progress and betterment. It is understood by many to be a means of overcoming handicaps, achieving greater equality and acquiring wealth and social status. Education is perceived as a place where children can develop according to their unique needs and potential. It is also perceived as one of the best means of achieving greater social equality. Many would say that the purpose of education should be to develop every individual to their full potential and give them a chance to achieve as much in life as their natural abilities allow (meritocracy).

Disarming the Myth: A Critical Approach to Schooling

During the struggle for the creation of public schooling the opposition

raised many important issues justifying their resistance. Although there seems to

be little room for argument against public schooling when the public school

proponents paint such a positive picture, there was indeed a strong resistance to

this movement. In *Traditions of American Education* Cremin (1977) writes:

> … the vernaculars of American education sought to provide a sense of community for a people who were increasing in number, diversifying in origin, and insistently mobile… I believe it may be fairly characterized as a Christian paideia that united the symbols of Protestantism, the values of the New Testament… It was a national paideia too… (87).

The American populace at this time was becoming more and more

diversified as people emigrated from poorer European nations. These immigrants

supplied the growing need for labor in the rapidly industrializing nation. From

their nations of origin, these immigrants brought with them religion, culture, and

tradition that differed from that of the peoples that had recently established dominance on the continent. Specifically, the Irish and Italian immigrants, amongst others, were not of the Protestant faith and tradition. These immigrants feared religion and its role in public schooling as well as the institutionalization of their children by force. They fought back against the establishment of compulsory public schooling, developing the Catholic school system as a form of resistance.

Despite the "strenuous opposition", compulsory education laws were eventually passed nationally, with Mississippi being the final state to enact a law in 1918 (Gatto, 2003, 102).   As educational theory and schooling were more thoroughly explored in an academic and political sense, a critical approach to schooling and the functions of the educational institution slowly began to emerge, further developing some of the issues that had been brought to light by the compulsory education opposition at the turn of the century.

It has been argued that since its inception, schooling for the masses has always had a purpose, other than simple education for the sake of learning, ingrained in its design. Horace Mann, the father of American public schooling, had more than book learning in mind for students of his common school.

> Mann was tremendously impressed with the diversity of the American people. Yet he feared that conflicts of value might rip them apart and render them powerless. Dreading the destructive possibilities of religious, political, and class difference, he sought a common value system within which diversity might flourish. His quest was for a new public philosophy, a sense of community to be shared by Americans of every background and persuasion (Cremin, 1961, 10).

With such wording, Cremin alludes to what can more accurately be described as moral education for the masses, one pushing a value system revered by the dominant culture. The critical approach to schooling highlights this dominant value system as well as additional alternative purposes to schooling that work to perpetuate the dominant culture.

In approaching the school myth, there is an economic aspect to the equation. Gatto (2003) in *The Underground History of American Education* writes,

> From the beginning, there was purpose behind forced schooling, purpose which had nothing to do with what parents, kids, or communities wanted. Instead, this grand purpose was forged out of what a highly centralized corporate economy and system of finance bent on internationalizing itself was thought to need... School was looked upon from the first decade of the twentieth century as a branch of industry and a tool of governance (38).

Gatto goes on to quote Woodrow Wilson in a speech he gave before businessmen as saying, "We want one class to have a liberal education. We want another class, a very much larger class of necessity, to forgo the privilege of a liberal education and fit themselves to perform the specific difficult manual tasks" (Gatto, 2003, 38).

From the start, business and union organizations have had a say in public schooling. By 1905, industrial corporations employed 71 per cent of all wage earners, mining enterprises 10 per cent more (Gatto, 2003, 166). Students from poor, working-class families were seen as future employees, whose curriculum business naturally had a right to influence. In the early 1900s, groups such as the

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National Association of Manufacturers and the American Federation of Labor

lobbied for vocational education, especially for certain members of the student

population. In 1910, the National Association for Education came forward with,

"... a vigorous statement referring to vocational training as 'the central and

dominant factor' in the education of pupils headed for industry" (Cremin, 1961,

50). Such wording suggests and supports a connection between compulsory

schooling and the working-class student.

This was a time of industrialization, mass production and the emergence

of the modern capitalist economy. Business and labor organizations wanted a

hand in the training of their future employees, especially those "headed for

industry". They turned to compulsory schooling as a venue for such training to

occur. As outlined in *The Transformation of School;*

> Under the modern factory system, apprenticeship had deteriorated into a
> haphazard arrangement in which masters not longer cared to teach, in
> which boys were unready to accept prolonged periods of indenture, and in
> which child labor had therefore become exploitative rather than educative.
> To compound the difficulty, labor unions, controlled overwhelmingly by
> 'foreigners', were conspiring drastically to limit the number of
> apprenticeships, thereby restricting the flow of American boys into the
> trades… the solution was clear… Schools would assume the classical
> function of apprenticeship (Cremin, 1961, 35).

The school myth described in the previous section above holds school and

education as an arena for attaining social equality and opportunities for social

mobility. The critical approach to schooling, which has spawned a multitude of

theories, does not ignore the reality of compulsory school and the circumstances

of its inception. The critical approach holds schooling in a different light.

Margolis et al. (2001) credit the "correspondence theory", developed by Bowles and Gintis, as the most "influential examination of the process by which schools reproduce these dominant interests" (p. 7). This theory argues that "through formal and hidden curricula schools reproduce the social relations necessary to maintain capitalism: competition, and evaluation, hierarchical divisions of labor, bureaucratic authority, compliance, and the fragmented and alienated nature of work".

As described by Aronowitz and Giroux,

> Contrary to the claims of liberal theorists and historians that public education offers possibilities for individual development, social mobility, and political and economic power to the disadvantaged and dispossessed, radical educators have argued that the main functions of schools are the reproduction of the dominant ideology, its forms of knowledge, and the distribution of skills needed to reproduce the social division of labor" and that, "… schools as institutions could only be understood through an analysis of their relationship to the state and the economy (1985, p. 69).

The various critical theories that evolved differ in ways that are valid and of importance. I do not offer up an analysis of the intricacies of critical education theories in this literature review. I simply wish to emphasize a notion central to the critical approach to education: that of reproduction. In other words, schooling is a social institution that aids in the recreation of the existing hierarchical society, and this dispels the myth of schooling that has been and continues to be the bastion of liberal educators.

Specifically, this idea of reproduction can be broken down as follows:

First, schools provided different classes and social groups with the knowledge and skills they needed to occupy their respective places in a labor force stratified by class, race, and gender. Second, schools were seen as reproductive in the cultural sense, functioning in part to distribute and legitimate forms of knowledge, values, language, and modes of style that constitute the dominant culture and its interests. Third, schools were viewed as part of a state apparatus that produced and legitimated the economic and ideological imperatives that underlie the state's political power (Arnonowitz, Giroux, 1985, p. 70).

This reproductive approach to schooling is echoed by the words of John Taylor Gatto in his book *Dumbing Us Down*. Gatto states that, "School as it was built is an essential support system for a model of social engineering that condemns most people to be subordinate stones in a pyramid that narrows as it ascends to a terminal of control. School is an artifice that makes such a pyramidical social order seem inevitable..." (Gatto, 1992, p. 14).

The main criticism of the reproductive theory is that it does not give human beings agency. In other words, it fuses human beings to social institutions and renders them powerless to make a change in their oppression; unable to resist or create their own history, doomed to recreate the existing system. In response to the lack of human agency and the limitations imposed by the reproductive model, there emerged an approach that aims to give some power back to the individuals that exist within social institutions. Resistance theory gives, "… central importance to the notions of conflict, struggle and resistance" (Aronowitz, 1985, p. 71). It is a theoretical framework that allows specific school locations and individuals to be explored as unique places where resistance can and does occur. There is no need to examine this theory in detail, rather it is an important addition

to the theory of reproduction and allows for a better understanding of schooling

and the ways in which approaching issues can lead to a more beneficial outcome

for the participants of the compulsory schooling system. I will draw on both the

reproduction theory as well as the notion of human agency, in my critical

approach to my research.

The Hidden Curriculum

Both central and essential to the critical approach to schooling is the

notion of a hidden curriculum. The concept of a hidden curriculum emerges in

important research pertaining to the connection between schooling and labor.

Aronowitz and Giroux define the hidden curriculum as,

> … those classroom social relations that embody specific messages which
> legitimize the particular views of work, authority, social rules, and values
> that sustain capitalistic logic and rationality, particularly as manifested in
> the workplace. The power of these messages lies in their seemingly
> universal qualities- qualities that emerge as part of the structured silences
> that permeate all levels of school and classroom relations (1985, p. 75).

Michael Apple and Nancy King get at the essence of the hidden

curriculum when they take a look at the function of schools and what they teach.

In this approach, the hidden curriculum performs a functional role in society.

 They state that,

> … schools were in part designed to teach exactly these things (behavioral
> consensus, institutional rather than personal goals and norms, alienation
> from one's products). The hidden curriculum, the tacit teaching of social
> and economic norms and expectations to students in schools (allows
> schools to) … do what they are in fact supposed to do, by and large, at
> least in terms of roughly providing dispositions and propensities that are

quite functional to one's later life in a complex and stratified social and economic order" (Giroux, Purpel, 1983, p. 82).

Elizabeth Vallance makes an excellent point when she states that, "…the hidden curriculum became hidden by the end of the nineteenth century simply because by that point the rhetoric had done its job. Schooling had evolved from a supplementary socializing influence to an active impositional force. By the turn of the century it could be taken for granted that the schools offered an experience sufficiently homogenous and regimented. The hidden curriculum was well ensconced" (Giroux, Purpel, 1983, p. 20).

Noteworthy Studies

By way of literature pertaining to social class and school knowledge, I would like to highlight two studies that are fundamental in terms of prior work on the topic. These studies, which are not only relevant but also imperative in an analysis such as the one attempted in this literature review, are the works of Paul Willis and Jean Anyon.

Learning to Labor

In 1977, Paul Willis published the findings of his study on class and schooling in a book entitled *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs.* This study has become a classic in educational research and no discussion on class and schooling can develop without this study serving as the foundation. Paul Willis conducted his study using ethnographic methods and a

neo-Marxist approach, which brought him to unexpected findings. His

observations centered on a group of twelve working class boys in Birmingham,

England in their senior year of school. He referred to these boys as the "lads". He

followed this group in the last eighteen months of their final year in school as well

as their first few months in the adult working world.

Contrary to the reproduction theories popular at the time, Willis

discovered that the "lads" were actually not passive recipients schooled as future

workers for the capitalist society. Rather, these students engaged in resistance to

their schooling. The outcome of this resistance had a negative effect on the

quality of life for these students. Stanley Aronowitz gives an excellent

description of this resistance in the introduction to the 1981 edition of the book.

He writes, " … Willis opposes the manipulation thesis of radical critiques with

the findings, based upon careful ethnographic methodology, that working class

'lads' create their own culture of resistance to school knowledge. Or, to be more

exact, truancy, counterculture, and disruption of the intended reproductive

outcomes of the curriculum and pedagogy of schools yield an ironic effect: the

'lads' *disqualify* themselves from the opportunity to enter middle class jobs…

Instead, the students produce themselves as rebellious, 'uneducated' workers

whose single choice is the unskilled and semi-skilled occupations found in

manual labor" (Willis, 1981, p. xi).

In other words, these students did not simply sit back and receive

schooling that would teach them how to follow orders and engage in menial tasks

as compliant workers. These "lads" resisted their schooling. Unfortunately, it

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was in resistance that these "lads" denied themselves any formal education and graduated into the adult working world as unskilled workers. These unintended consequences of resistance to schooling lead the "lads" to positions in manual labor rather than the actual curriculum and intentions of schooling leading them to such positions.

Social Class And School Knowledge

In her study, "Social Class and School Knowledge", Jean Anyon examines data on school knowledge collected in a study of five New Jersey elementary schools. The distinction in the choice of the five school settings is based on social class. The definition of 'social class' is very specific as defined by Anyon (1981):

> For the purpose of this study, social class is considered as a series of relationships to several aspects of the process in society by which goods, services, and culture are produced. That is, while one's occupational status and income level contribute to one's social class, they do not define it. Contributing as well are one's relationship to the system of ownership of physical and cultural capital, to the structure of authority at work and in society, and to the content and process of one's own work activity… capitalists and affluent professional persons have more access to decision-making power in work institutions and in society than do many middle-class and most working-class people; capitalist and professional work activity often involves more creativity, conceptualization, and autonomy than do the jobs of most middle-class and most working class people in, say, civil service (the bureaucracy) or industry (p. 4).

Anyon uses this definition in classifying the chosen school sites by social class. There are four categories of social class; *working-class schools*, *middle-class schools*, *affluent professional schools*, and *executive elite schools*. Anyon specifically looks at school knowledge by focusing on materials, student-teacher

interaction, instruction, as well as how knowledge is defined by participants, both students and faculty.

The study brings to light important aspects of the differences in the schooling provided to students in these dissimilar school settings. In the working-class schools, there is an emphasis on facts and procedures. Students learn to rules of grammar and punctuation. There are definite truths in social studies and a right way to do division in math. Students are taught to follow steps and procedures with little room for options and student choice. Students directly copy teacher notes from the board. Teachers are told to, "Just do your best. If they learn to add and subtract, that's a bonus. If not, don't worry about it" (Anyon, 1981, p. 7). Teachers try not to challenge students with anything considered beyond the basics. As one fifth-grade teacher put it, he does not give the science tests provided in the teacher's manual because, "It's too depressing. They never get it, and they'll never use it" (Anyon, 1981, p. 10).

Students in working-class schools define knowledge as, "The skills to do work." and "Doing pages in our books and things." Students see the source of knowledge as "Books" or "The Board of Ed." or "Teachers". When students were asked if they would attend college, the majority did not think they would (Anyon, 1981, p. 10).

The middle-class schools are less rigid then the working-class schools in that there is still an emphasis on the right answer, but there is some flexibility and choice when it comes to getting the right answer. In math, for example, several ways to approach a problem are demonstrated. Students are how they came to an

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answer and in asking "how?" teachers ensure that students understand what they are doing. Social studies is not presented as straight facts, it is more "conceptual".

Students from the middle-class schools define knowledge as, "To remember" and "It's smartness" or "Knowledge is something you learn". For these students, knowledge is derived "From teachers" or "From books" or "From libraries" and even "From everywhere". Anyon notes that the source of knowledge is "out there" (Anyon, 1981, p. 15).

In the affluent professional school, things are quite different. Instead of the principle setting low standards and expectations for teachers, the principle at this school setting requires that, "…the students should not just 'regurgitate' facts, but should 'immerse themselves in ideas'… 'creativity and personal development' are important goals for the children in his school" (Anyon, 1981, p. 18).

As stated by one of the fifth-grade teachers, "My goal is to have the children learn from experience" (Anyon, 1981, p. 17). This is emphasized in the various subjects. Math is a journey of discovery where students use geoboards, produce 8-mm films on the metric system, and teachers use all the supplemental material provided by the math textbook publishers. Students engage in scientific experiments with plenty of hands-on experience. Students produce creative writing pieces. Social studies involves the discussion of topics such as "competing world views" and "social class". Overall, students are expressive and involved in the construction of their own individual understanding of things.

In this school, students define knowledge as, "How smart you are- a brain." and "Being smart." or "Knowing a lot of subjects." or "Figuring out stuff." This knowledge is said to come from, "Your head." or "Your brain, you make it up in your brain." and "From reading." or "From going places." (Anyon, 1981, p. 20). Students feel strongly that they, as individuals, can create knowledge or have an "active approach" in its acquisition.

Finally, Anyon focuses on the executive elite school. In this school setting teachers have high expectations of their students. As expressed by one teacher, "They'll go to the best schools, and we have to prepare them" (Anyon, 1981, p. 24).

Math is taught as a "decision-making process". Students make decisions on how to work through problems. In science, there is an emphasis on reasoning and intellectual process. Social studies involves a good deal of independent library research in addition to the rigorous academic approach to the subject matter. Social studies knowledge in this school is described as, "… more sophisticated, complex, and analytical than in other schools" (Anyon, 1981, p. 26).

For the students in the executive elite school, knowledge is described as, "Knowing certain things." or "It's information that you've gotten, like in school." and "It's-you know what it is you understand- that's knowledge: Understanding!" The majority of students attribute knowledge to "past experience" or "tradition". The majority of students interviewed in this school setting definitely think that they could be whatever they wanted when they grow up (Anyon, 1981, p. 28).

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In her conclusion, Anyon brings up two very pertinent points. Most importantly, the point that schooling differs greatly for students based on social class as defined in the study. These differences aid in the reproduction of the existing social class system through the differing classroom experiences. Additionally, there is what Anyon refers to as "nonreproductive" aspects of schooling. For example, "The absence of traditional bodies of knowledge and ideology (in the working-class and middle-class schools) may make these children vulnerable to alternative ideas; the children may be more open to ideas that support fundamental social change" (Anyon, 1981, p. 33).

The School To Prison Pipeline: What Schools Teach Today

As to be expected, there have been developments in current educational literature as well as in the structure of society since the influential studies of Anyon and Willis. The imminent changes were apparent to Willis as he writes in his afterward, "But already even here in the United Kingdom the times have changed. Unemployment is over ten percent and heading for three million shortly. Most affected are the young, unskilled, and low-qualified early school leavers. With structural changes in the economy proceeding fast apace, many jobs for the young may never reappear…" (Willis, 1981, p. 200).

In order to understand how these changes have developed into the recent problem addressed in this thesis, it is essential to situate the problem with historical context.

Ken McGrew (2008) provides an excellent historical backdrop that outlines the development and analysis of the current crisis of the funneling of impoverished youth into the criminal justice system. The correlation between incarceration of youth and poverty has a long history of connection in the United States. Since the inception of juvenile facilities, or Houses of Refuge, in New York the emphasis has been placed on the poor, especially those of the working class immigrant population. As stated by McGrew, "Thus, it was fear of the working class, particularly the immigrant communities arriving from Europe who were thought to have revolutionary ideals, which motivated the wealthy in society to throw their weight behind the development of juvenile facilities" (McGrew, 2008, p. 25).

The development of juvenile courts came soon after, with the so-called progressive movement arguing that children were warranted a fair trial and also that children should be tried in a separate court system from adult criminals. By the year 1915, 46 states had established juvenile court systems. There was a slight shift in the societal attitude towards juvenile delinquents and juvenile courts began to function more as " a part of a social services nexus", and these progressive reformers pushed for these changes in order to better control the poor. "The harsh punishments of the past were rejected not because they were viewed as inherently inhumane or unethical, but because they were viewed as less sophisticated and ultimately less effective" and that these changes "reflected the changes in capitalist production" (McGrew, 2008, p. 29). The point made by McGrew is pivotal in any analysis of the functions of the juvenile delinquent

facilities as this economic system continues to influence the involvement of juvenile facilities in the education system today. As pointed out previously in the historical breakdown of the development of the public school, the economic system went hand in hand with the establishment of schools. It follows that the inception of the juvenile court system in this country mirrors the relationship that industry has had with schooling and, specifically, the state involvement in the lives of students from poor, immigrant/minority, working class families.

In more recent times, researchers have made a strong connection between schools in poor neighborhoods and the criminal justice system. The term "school-to-prison pipeline" emerged in the eighties and is used to describe the correlation between students from low socioeconomic status and the funneling of students into the criminal justice system through their school. Data suggests that the adoption of zero-tolerance policies in school districts across the country, and the increased involvement of police presence in schools coupled with the enactment of laws that mandate student referral to law enforcement authorities for various school code violations have contributed to a "significant increase" in the suspension and expulsion of students as well as the increased involvement of students from low socioeconomic status with the criminal justice system (Ward & Losen, 2003, 10). Additionally, "Not surprisingly, those most frequently targeted for punishment in school often look- in terms of race, gender and socioeconomic status- a lot like smaller versions of the adults who are most likely to be incarcerated in society" (Noguera, 2003).

In this way, schooling continues to mirror society at large. "The prison system is the largest growth industry in the United States. Levels of inequality and correlated poverty, violence and human suffering, are quickly approaching those at the beginning of the 20th century" and "… the realities of the incarceration of poor people… are related to the high levels of educational inequality" (McGrew, 2008, 32). With the decrease in the demand for physical labor in the United States, the increase in the flight of factory production abroad, and the continuing development of the prison industrial complex used to house and control an increasingly unemployed poor sector of society, prisons have come to replace a factory job and school failure can now be said to lead to incarceration for students from low socioeconomic status instead of the working class jobs afforded to the lads of Paul Willis' study.

Chapter 3

METHODS

"Research is a living relation between men… Indeed, the sociologist and his

'object' form a couple, each one of which is to be interpreted by the other; the

relationship between them must be itself interpreted as a moment in history."

– Sartre, Search for a Method

My participant observation study explores the differences in the schooling

experienced by students from differing socioeconomic backgrounds that might

have the potential to contribute to the inconsistencies in their eventual

employment, or lack thereof. This study will lead to a deeper understanding of

the interactions between students and schooling and how these can contribute to

their "graduation" into adulthood and possible career choices or lack there of.

Specifically, I am interested in the interactions that occur between students and

teachers/administrators as well as between students and their physical

environment. These interactions are of particular interest because they have

potential to influence the future life paths of students.

The Problem

Students from impoverished urban and rural neighborhoods continue to

become employed in working-class jobs or end up involved in criminal activity.

Resorting to criminal activity can often lead to cycles of incarceration and

poverty. In contrast, the children in privileged neighborhoods tend to graduate into positions of ownership and management, which follows their higher education experiences.

The question that arises, therefore, is: Why is it that the majority of students from poor districts persist in being marginalized from seeking higher education and continue to enter the workforce employed in working-class positions? Additionally, why is it that, recently, instead of becoming employed in working-class positions, a good portion of these students finds themselves in a cycle of poverty and incarceration? This necessitates the concern that they do not end up in the positions of power, authority and affluence that is typical of students who graduate from economically privileged neighborhoods. Qualitative research methods can prove to be beneficial as a form of inquiry into this problem.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, as stated by Morrow in the *Handbook of Counseling Psychology*, is defined, "…by its emphasis on qualities or essences or the categories of the phenomenon of study. Data are verbal and visual rather than statistical. Researchers gather data by observing in detail what people do, by listening to their words, and by observing the artifacts they produce; they make accurate verbal and visual records of and form inferences from these nonnumeric data" (Brown & Lent, 2008, p. 200). This differs from quantitative research in that quantitative research focuses on numerical data. The experiences of the students in the school sites of choice, as perceived by the qualitative research

tools used, will serve as the data necessary to tell the story of what goes on at these sites. Qualitative research allows the data to tell a rich and well-rounded account of the classroom reality and student experience that quantitative methods would be unable to produce.

Furthermore, the daily encounters of students with schooling as well as the effects of their schooling will be analyzed by treating each classroom as a unique social situation. Each classroom will be viewed as an individual social setting brought together and given meaning by the human interactions that occur within that space. As a researcher, I will "… stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationships between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" and " …seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 8).

In order to grasp this "created meaning" I approach the research inquiry with an interpretive perspective to the problem at hand. The interpretive paradigm asserts the emphasis on a constructed reality that is specific to a particular social experience. As noted by Morrow and Smith, the interpretive perspective is "relativist". "Individual meanings, and, therefore, 'realities' are particular to individuals but may be shared among individuals, that is, constructed within a social context" (Brown & Lent, 2008, p. 202). The interpretive paradigm will allow me to enter the school site that I have chosen and explore as well as come to an understanding of the reality that exists within the location.

Research Design

In approaching this problem, I employed multiple methods that fall under the category of qualitative research in order to obtain data. As stated in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, "Qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus. However, the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). Thus the use of a variety of methods in the approach of this problem helped to create a deeper understanding of daily experience of the participants.

The School Site(s)

For the purpose of this research inquiry I compared the everyday schooling that I observed in an affluent school site setting with existing, available data on the experiences of students in lower socioeconomic status schools, specifically those in juvenile detention facilities. The original research design included a second school site that would provide data for comparison. This second proposed site was a juvenile detention facility in Phoenix, Arizona. After spending months navigating both the research application process with the institutional review board (IRB) at Arizona State University as well as the process for research proposal with the state facility, I was denied permission to research by the university board and was met with much resistance from the research director at the state facility. For personal reasons, I moved close to family in Connecticut and again approached the university research board and proposed

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research at a Connecticut juvenile detention facility. The IRB at Arizona State University finally granted my research design approval pending the approval of the detention facility. After a few more months of completing an application, which included a literature review as well as research design and intentions, the state denied me access to the facility claiming that it was "due to the constraints on our resources in the school system". Although I initially intended on visiting two school sites and conducting a comparative analysis afterwards, I was not planning on the resistance to proposed research in the juvenile detention facility setting. It is important to note that this experience already sets precedence for a differentiation in the experience of "school", the day-to-day life of a child between the ages of 5-18 in the Unites States, for students. This differentiation will be discussed further in my data analysis and conclusions sections.

Since I experienced difficulty in gaining access to a youth facility, I predominantly drew from three sources that I used as the basis for comparative data. One source that I used was a study conducted by Ken McGrew (2008). In this study, McGrew spent a year conducting a critical ethnography at a juvenile court and detention center in Wisconsin. My second source was an issue of a journal published as a result of a conference held in May of 2003 on the "School-to-Prison-Pipeline". The issue contained varying studies addressing the "racial disparities within the criminal and juvenile justice systems" and "noted the striking parallels between racial disproportions within school discipline and juvenile justice data". It attempted to "consider the impact of suspensions on deterring inappropriate behavior and on future academic success, the growing use

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of disciplinary alternative schools for suspended and expelled students, and the lack of coordination between the educational and juvenile justice systems" (Wald & Losen, 2003, 1). The final source used was *Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform* where Anyon takes a look at various New Jersey schools. These particular works functioned as the foundation for my data involving juvenile detention.

The affluent school site of choice was a private school in a prosperous neighborhood in Phoenix, Arizona. This school served a K-12 coed population. Tuition at this private school was $20,800.00 per year. I chose this specific school site because it was a school that had the reputation of providing a quality education to students and the majority of the students attended prominent colleges upon graduation. The administrators of the affluent school site were contacted and given a letter of intent describing the research design. The staff, parents and students were also given letters of intent. I was openly welcome to observe this school in operation and had no difficulty in the process of research acceptance by the IRB for this school site.

Participant Observation

In this study I used participant observation to gain knowledge of the particulars of the school site of study. As described by Angrosino and Perez in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, "Observation has been characterized as 'the fundamental base of all research methods' in the social and behavioral sciences and as the 'mainstay of the ethnographic enterprise'" (Denzin & Lincoln,

2005, p. 673). Stephen Lyng succinctly sums up the importance of participant observation when he writes, "… to capture socially situated realities faithfully, researchers must participate in interactional exchanges with group members as they deal with the problems and constraints imposed by their material circumstances. Adopting this approach puts researchers in touch with dimensions of their subjects' experience that constitute critically important forms of data." (Ferrell & Hamm, 1998, p. 237).

I spent eight weeks at the affluent school location and recorded student-teacher interaction as well as elements of student interaction with the physical environment. In my observations I attempted to gain a better understanding of the unique setting. I observed varying classrooms at the eighth grade level, not following any particular grouping of students or any particular teacher. By visiting many classrooms and different teachers, I was exposed to differing interactions within the school environment and was able to gain a better understanding of the school climate as a whole rather then that of one particular classroom.

Observations were recorded in a notebook and then analyzed daily in order to extract pertinent data as well as to narrow the focus of my observations for the subsequent days of observation. For the duration of the study, and in the analysis of data, I maintained an awareness of the effect that I had on the observations. Angrosino argues that, "All observation involves the observer's participation in the world being studied. There is no pure, objective, detached observation; the effects of the observer's presence can never be erased. Further,

the colonial concept of the subject (the object of the observer's gaze) is no longer

appropriate. Observers now function as collaborative participants in action

inquiry settings" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 634). In order to clarify the validity

of the findings, I checked both with students and teachers to clarify meanings that

I came to understand and define from my observations. In this way, the

participants in the research study were given the opportunity to co-create

meanings with myself. This helped to level the hierarchy inherent in research.

The nightly analysis of data aided in the meaning-making process by allowing me

to check in with participants for the duration of the observations.

Interview

For the purpose of this study I used the interview method to gain a greater

understanding of the social situations present the school site. As stated in the

Handbook of Qualitative Research, "… interviewing is one of the most common

and powerful ways in which to understand our fellow human beings" (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2005, p. 645). I conducted individual, formal interviews with

administration and teachers as well as with students who volunteered for formal

interviewing. These interviews were guided by questions established prior to the

interview. These guide questions were broad and did not dictate the direction and

scope of the interview. As Morrow describes in the *Handbook of Counseling*

Psychology, "… the researcher is interested in the categories that evolve from the

people studied (emic categories) rather than categories from theory that have been

operationalized by the researcher (etic categories)… interviews are not

psychometrically standardized..." instead the "…researcher aims to uncover the stories and categories of participants, in their own words, and therefore uses a variety of open-ended procedures that differ from study to study" (Brown & Lent, 2008, p. 200). Open-ended interview that elicited the involvement of the participant in the development of an interview allowed the fullness of the participant's character to be reflected in the conversations that I had. In this approach to interviewing participants, similar to my approach to participant observation, I attempted to co-create meanings with participants and to address the issue of hierarchy in research. I maintained participant contact information, specifically school email addresses and direct campus phone numbers in the case of faculty and administration, following the research period in order to allow for additional interviews and as a means to check-in with participants while I analyzed my data.

Photo Landscape

As mentioned above, with the use of multiple methods there emerges a greater understanding of a specific situation, a better picture of the reality that exists in the particular social setting. In order to utilize an additional method to aid in the understanding of such a setting, I employed the use of photography in my research inquiry. Collier argues that the camera is beneficial to the observer when he writes, " The camera is another instrumental extension of our senses, one that can record on a low scale of abstraction. The camera, by its optical character, has whole vision… the camera faithfully records this specialized subject and also

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all other associated elements within focus and scope of its lens. This capacity

makes the camera a valuable tool for the observer" (Collier & Collier, 1986, p. 7).

In reference to the photograph as a form of data Harper suggests, "The

photograph can be thought of as 'data'; in fact the unique character of

photographic images force us to rethink many of our assumptions about how we

move from observation to analysis in all forms of sociological research" (Harper,

1998, p. 35). In reference to the study, I took photographs of the school's

physical environment. I took photographs of areas such as classrooms, the

grounds, designated play areas, administrative offices etc. These photographs

served as empirical data, which I analyzed in a comparative fashion. Because I

did not have access to a juvenile detention facility, I used stock photos of juvenile

detention facilities found on the Internet. Although this was not the best option

for a comparative analysis, it was the only option that I had due to the situation.

These photos were found by using the search engine "Google" to conduct an

images search under the term "juvenile detention facility".

Disconfirming Evidence

In the research process, a researcher often approaches a situation with a

certain perspective. Simply defining a problem presents a particular standpoint,

that of the researcher. As the research develops, contrary evidence presents itself

and challenges the researcher. In my observations, I focused on the emergence of

data that is not necessarily simply data that proves a certain phenomenon occurs. I

keyed in on occurrences of disconfirming evidence. For example, students who

did not achieve in the affluent school site served as insight into situations when participants challenged the assumption that the affluent school site led students to successful outcomes. This is one piece of disconfirming evidence that added to the validity of the reflection of the reality at this school site. It is such evidence that I explored rather than disregarded.

Implications of Research

Since this undertaking was approached from an interpretive perspective, the understanding of the reality is simply a reflection of the particular classrooms of study. As acknowledged by Erickson, "This is not to say that interpretive research is not interested in the discovery of universals, but that it takes different routes to their discovery, given the assumptions about the state of nature in social life that interpretive researchers make. The search is not for abstract universals arrived at by statistical generalization from a sample population, but for concrete universals, arrived at by studying a specific case in great detail, and then comparing it with other cases studied in equally great detail" (Erickson, 1986, 130). The findings from the data obtained from this research cannot serve as fact. These findings serve as one particular case in a particular place. This research is an addition to prior research addressing the effects of schooling in the recreation of the social class system. It leads to a better understanding of why students from underprivileged backgrounds continue to lack the social success of their privileged counterparts with the potential to question the function of schooling in maintaining the existing social class system.

Definitions

There are two terms that require clarification for the purpose of this study. In my research I essentially looked at *schooling* and its relationship to *socioeconomic status*. First, it is important to emphasize a distinction between *schooling* and an *education*. This is a theme in Ivan Illich's critical approach to compulsory education where *school* is defined as, "... the age-specific, teacher-related process requiring full-time attendance at an obligatory curriculum" (Illich, 1970, p. 25). Illich goes on to differentiate between *schooling* and *education*. He describes *school* as a place where students are taught skills that can be "acquired and improved by drills", and this differs from the *education* of an individual, which allows for the " exploratory and creative use of skills" which "cannot rely on drills" (1970, p. 17). In a critical approach, it is necessary to keep this distinction in mind as it becomes obvious through examination that *schooling* and *education* are not synonymous. When I refer to *schooling* in this study, I am referring to a compulsory experience universal, although far from similar, for children in the legally mandated school-age years of their lives. This experience typically takes place in a physical environment designated as a *school*, whereas an education can occur in many places at differing moments of time in an individual's life.

Secondly, it is necessary to have a discussion on *socioeconomic status*. Specifically, when I make reference to students of *low socioeconomic status* or *students from impoverished neighborhoods* there are implicit truths that I would

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like to recognize. At this point I will draw from Jean Anyon's definition of social class outlined in my literature review, and will expand this definition to include a description of the stark reality of what low socioeconomic status looks like in the United States. Inherent to any discussion on poverty in the United States is the presence of racial implications. People of color comprise a disproportionate percentage of people living in poverty. Due to this fact, studies on impoverished youth and their involvement with juvenile detention reflects this disproportion. In a description of the demographic characteristics of students with multiple school suspensions, which has been linked to involvement with the criminal justice system and school failure, "…black males are assigned suspensions more often than their enrollment numbers in the total student population would suggest" and there exists "…a definite trend for poor black males who are in special education to be suspended much more often than would be expected given their representation in the overall student population" (Wald & Losen, 2003, 26). Race and social class go hand-in-hand in the United States. When I refer to *socioeconomic status* in this study, I acknowledge this truth as race is implied throughout my discussion of the relationship between *schooling* and *socioeconomic status*.

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Chapter 4

SOUTHWEST COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

"At Southwest Country Day School you can do anything and everything!"

-- High school senior at 8th grade SCDS info session

I entered the front office at the Southwest Country Day School (SCDS) and was immediately received by an inviting atmosphere. The scent of fresh baked apple pie wafted through the office, and although the scent was artificial, it created a feeling of warmth. The woman at the front desk smiled as she simultaneously interacted with phone calls, attended to visiting parents, and shuffled papers around her desk. Staff filtered in and out of the office. They exchanged jokes and light, cheerful conversation. The front office cordially served the needs of visiting parents and guests of the school. Like the front desk concierge of a hotel, the office was a place that was ready to attend to your needs and inquiries.

Past the front office and through the back doors I gained access to the 40-acre campus known as SCDS. The campus was situated in a big Southwestern city where, as of 2007, 17.8 per cent of the residents lived below the poverty line. This was roughly 5 percent above the national average (source omitted since it revealed location of school site). The thought of poverty, however, was far from my mind upon stepping foot on campus grounds. The feel was not unlike that of a small private college campus, with a tuition cost quite similar to that of some such

private college. Parents of the eighth grade class paid $20,800.00 in order to send their child to the academy for the 2009-2010 academic school year.

The grounds of the campus were landscaped and well manicured. A mountain chain that bordered this upper class region of the city served as a tranquil backdrop to the daily endeavors pursued by the students at SCDS. Although the school was situated in one of the ten largest cities in the nation, there was no evidence of a city in sight. The 40 acres of land created the ambiance of a peaceful retreat. There were buildings nestled in and around the 40 acres and students strolled along concrete pathways among the desert-landscaped gardens.

The students themselves were clad in the most current trends. There were no uniform requirements. Instead the students flaunted high-end jeans and stylish footwear. They walked in small groups and headed towards their next class while engaged in conversations, smiling, pushing and, at times, screaming with laughter; behavior very typical of an adolescent. A bell rang but there was no uniform, mechanical reaction to the bell. For a visiting observer the purpose of this bell could not be immediately discerned. Eventually, students filtered slowly into their designated classrooms. A peaceful silence, almost a vacuum of noise, was the true determinant of the start of class.

Experience and Opportunity

"(Southwest Country Day School) is a place where we combine opportunities to pursue academic excellence with opportunities to become well-rounded individuals. It is a place where we create a safe, nurturing environment in order to allow students the time and resources to expand their talents, to discover themselves and to become lifelong learners."

-- Description of SCDS on school website

For students at SCDS, school was a source of and an outlet to a multitude of experiences and opportunity. These experiences began on the campus itself. SCDS was reflective of the modern trends in technological advancement. Just as one might experience on a typical college campus, some students toted the most recent model of laptop. Oftentimes students took notes during class on their laptop or used them for group projects.

Every classroom came equipped with a Smartboard as well as a projector. These were for use by both staff and students. Some classrooms, such as the science lab, were also equipped with Mac desktop computers at each lab station. Internet access was never far from the fingertips of students and staff. In fact, the internet was such an integral part of the curriculum design that those students who did not have internet access in their home, the students attending SCDS on scholarship, were provided this service by the school so that access to the school website could be attained and assignments could be completed. Students could complete, hand-in and present some school assignments via this school website.

The campus offered students access to a nearly Olympic-sized, eight-lane swimming pool with a competitive swim team. There were four tennis courts.

The campus offered swimming, tennis, lacrosse, soccer, softball, baseball, and basketball, just to name a few of the athletic opportunities made available.

Teachers on campus were highly educated in their subject matter and were very passionate about what they taught. They did not emphasize state testing or standards-based curriculum. They encouraged a genuine interest in the subject matter taught. Subjects included English, Earth Science, Geometry, Algebra, American History, Art and Music. Students of the eighth grade class took Spanish or Mandarin class. One student in the eighth grade class showed an interest in French and was sent to the upper school campus to take a class for French class.

Teachers on the eighth grade team also led advisory groups. These were class periods where each teacher met with a few students to provide individualized guidance and to develop a relationship with the students in their small group. During advisory, specific interests of each student were explored and teachers helped their advisee reach out to the resources available through the SCDS campus to fuel their personal interests.

At SCDS, even lunch was an experience. Lunch was provided for students by the school and was included in the tuition payment. The middle-school lunch period spanned from noon until 1:30. During that period, everyday, students spent one half of the period in music and one half of the period in lunch. Both students and staff ate their meals from the cafeteria and some teachers did so in the cafeteria itself. Like the rest of the campus structure, the cafeteria at SCDS was more evocative of a college-dining hall then a middle-school cafeteria with

menu items that included veggie burgers, grilled chicken burgers, Buffalo wings, and vegetable tacos. Students had many choices and the atmosphere was one that catered to the individual needs of the "customer". If one choice did not satisfy, then there were many other options.

In addition to the opportunities available to students on-campus, there were unique off-campus experiences as well. The students in the Spanish class observed took a trip to the local state university to visit the Museum of Anthropology for an exhibit on the Mexican Day of the Dead celebration. Students also made masks and ate traditional sugar skulls as a part of the cultural experience on Latin American countries.

There were many field trips for SCDS students as well. The seventh grade class took a transnational trip to Boston. The eighth grade class went on a class trip to the Catalina Island. The science teacher took some students, who went through a formal application process, on a summer sailing trip to the Apostle Islands. (This was the same science teacher that ran the robotics team.) Students at the upper school were given study abroad opportunities and SCDS hosted students from other countries as well.

Community outreach was another element of taking the schooling experience off-campus. Students were required to participate in off-campus volunteer activities in order to develop compassion and contribute to their world. The eighth grade volunteered at a local shelter as a part of their required community outreach.

Essentially, the sky was the limit for students at SCDS. If a student expressed a particular interest in something, then staff was ready to make the interest tangible for that student. Students were introduced to varying experiences and were encouraged to not only develop academically, but to develop character as well.

Authority and Discipline

"These kids come from affluent families. They are very smart and they are good

kids" – P.E. teacher when asked to describe student population.

For the most part, discipline was not visible at SCDS. When students assembled into classrooms to start class, they were not at a hurried pace. Rather, they trickled in and found seating of choice, at times engaged in conversation. I did not observe one class during my period of observation that had a precise starting point. Each class met at a specific hour in the day, and the class schedule was printed for me and given to me as a reference. The classes correlated with the time periods designated for each class. Although these class time periods were adhered to, students were not rushing into a classroom to get into a specific seat by an exact time.

There was a case when a teacher was not present at the designated start time and so students that had gathered at the entrance of the classroom decided to enter, took a seat and waited for the teacher to get to class. There were also many times when a group of students were late to a class because a teacher from their

previous class went over the time allotted. There was never an instance observed

of disciplinary action taken against any student for not arriving to class on time.

A teacher beginning a discussion at the front of the room typically

signaled the start of class. The student response to the start of class tended to be

attention focused on the discussion at hand. The word "discussion" is used to

describe the interchange between students and the teacher because there was an

exchange of information between the students and the teacher. Students

contributed to the dialogue of the classroom and were encouraged to articulate

difficulties with a concept and to see failure as a challenge not as a threat. A good

example of this comes from my observations in a Geometry class one afternoon.

Students were given a problem that was at a more advanced level then they had

reached thus far in the school year. Students were asked to attempt the problem

independently.

Teacher: I have confidence that, given what you know and what you've come
across, you can work through this. I know this is tough.
Student: I don't get it.
Teacher: No, uh uh, not in my class. You know how I feel about that statement.
Give me specifics about what you don't understand.

In an Algebra class, one student expressed doubt about her capabilities.

These doubts were quickly swept aside and the student was encouraged to have

confidence in her attempts.

Teacher: So how do we find 'B'?
Student: Well, I don't know the fancy way.
Teacher: Well, I'm sure that your way is right. Just go ahead and tell me your
way.

Students often gave input. There were classrooms in which information was shared in roundtable discussion format. There were other classes where information was shared lecture style and students took notes. Students interacted with the class. They tipped their chairs backwards as they shared an idea. They doodled in their notebooks as they listened intently to the ongoing discussion. One afternoon, a student drew an entire portrait during an English class discussion. Students interrupted the teacher with comments and questions. Students spoke out of turn. Students spoke without raising hands even in a class session where raising a hand seemed to be protocol for student input. Students got up and left the room to use the bathroom. Students pulled out snacks to munch on. Students made sarcastic comments that did little to progress the momentum of the discussion at hand.

The teacher response to this was never shouting. Teachers did not yell at students or even raise their voice. Oftentimes, teachers used humor or a review of lesson objectives to guide students back towards the class topic if students began to have aside conversations. There was not once a situation where any disciplinary action was taken and disciplinary measures involving administration never occurred.

I asked teachers about their experience with students who were having trouble keeping up with the pace at SCDS. On rare occasions, SCDS was not a good fit for some students. These students went through a process that led them to be "counseled-out". This process involved counselors, teachers, and parents. The focus of the process was on what would work best for the student. According to

teacher description, there were suggestions made and, in the end, students ended

up in a school that would better serve their needs. Students were very rarely

counseled-out. These students were not treated as failures. Instead, SCDS was

simply not capable of serving the individual needs of these students. There was

never involvement with law enforcement, or alternative schools meant for

students with delinquent behaviors contacted.

The Future

"We start off with advantages when we are born; like the families we are from….
We are bred to be successful."
> -- Samantha, eighth grade student, when asked about
> her future success.

A big topic of conversation at SCDS was the future. The future was full

of opportunities and choices: a highway to navigate. SCDS boasts a 100% high

school graduation rate, with "virtually" 100% matriculation into four-year college

programs.   In an interview with the director of admissions, the majority of

students, quoted at 80%, was said to matriculate into colleges outside of the state.

It is safe to say that, since prestigious colleges do not exist within the state, this

distinction was made to insinuate that not only do students go on to attend

college, but that they are received by some of the best colleges in the nation.

The "virtually" 100% rate refers to the rare years that SCDS has "one or

two students" who do not end up going straight to college. For such students,

professionals exist on campus to help guide them into designing what is referred

to as a "gap-year".

During this "gap-year", students could, for example, attend a two year college temporarily, spend a fifth year at another independent boarding school, or decide to go abroad, as was the case for one young woman who decided to spend a year in France post-graduation. The director of admissions emphasized that this "gap-year" is backed by "… a particular plan or purpose with the idea still that coming in the year after is going to be the four year experience." Since the school had a college bound culture, nearly every student has eventually gone on to a four-year college program.

Being that SCDS was a college preparatory program, whenever teachers spoke of the future, they typically attributed certain skills as being necessary for success in college. Skills included taking notes during class and being articulate when arguing or making a point. The immediate future involved college, and everything tied in to being successful in this next step in life.

The Day School Landscape: Photographic Analysis of the Environment

My first impression of the SCDS campus was quite impressive. As mentioned above, the campus unfolded onto 40 acres of meticulously landscaped grounds, which ran across a mountain chain bordering the privileged northern region of the city. The campus was spotless. There was no trash on the grounds. Cement sidewalk pathways weaved in and around the campus.

Buildings were well-maintained, mid-century modern structures that dotted the landscape. Due to the warm southwestern weather, classrooms were

contained within independent structures and, contrary to traditional notions of a

school building, there were no lengthy hallways to be found.

Like the cleanliness of the outdoor environment, classrooms at SCDS

were fresh and inviting. Recently purchased student desks and spotless carpets

coupled with smoothly painted walls created an atmosphere of warmth, though it

was easy to see that these rooms had a scholastic intent. Student work adorned

the walls, teachers' desks sat in corners and white boards made it obvious to an

observer that, indeed, schooling happened in this place. Some classrooms had

couches, plants, and other items reminiscent of a home. Things in the classrooms

were new, clean and organized.

An important element to understanding what the daily experience of

students involves is that of the physical environment. This was more easily

facilitated through the use of visual representation. Photos taken on campus were

instrumental in the understanding and analysis of the environment. These photos

allowed for an interpretation of the environment that would be hard to get at

purely through the use of words. They provided a robust depiction of life on

campus for SCDS students.

 Photo 1 offers an accurate first impression of the campus. The serene,

resort-like ambiance is captured in this photograph. The crisp, clean feel of being

present in this place can be felt when looking at the image. There are some subtle

hints that might suggest that the location is perhaps a college campus or some sort

of recreational building exhibiting art or theater. What does not come to mind is

what is actually depicted in this photo, a secondary school serving students in the

seventh and eighth grade. Compulsory schooling laws dictate that students must attend school and doing so in a setting such as the one shown in Figure A could be a pleasant experience.

In Photo 2, it is more obvious that the location observed may perhaps function as a school setting, although this is not a definite observation. The picnic tables suggest that people spend time here. It is not clear that this is definitely a school setting, but once suggested, it would make sense. The type of school would definitely be one that serves a more privileged population since it bears no resemblance to a typical public school in the United States. It would also be more typical of a college setting then one that serves a seventh and eighth grade population. Again, the grounds are immaculate. The landscaping is breathtaking. Nature is a big part of this experience. Photo 2 really showcases the natural lighting typical on this campus, both indoors and out.

Although there are no indoor hallways leading to classrooms at this campus, lockers are tucked into overhangs that shelter the unsecured belongings of the students. The locker areas, as seen in Photo 3, resemble outdoor hallways, but do not function as such in the way that they are used. Students do not file down these pathways single file to get to their next class. Students walk in and around these pathways during intervals between classes free from the constrictions of walls.

Photo 3 highlights the windows that line the walls and the entrance to a typical classroom on the campus. The door and the windows are made of clear glass. This allows for a vast amount of natural lighting to filter in throughout the

day. This southwestern city has plenty of days full of sunlight to offer and the school does a great job of using this to their advantage. Again, the space is new and meticulously up-kept.

Photo 4 shows the computer-lined far wall of the middle school library. The wall is lined with small windows that let in the sunlight. All furniture and carpeting is new and clean. The Mac desktops are available for student use. Student work adorns the wall. The library provides a studious cove for students to work independently or with groups for school projects. Yet again, the space is inviting, fresh and clean.

The final image of the campus is that of one of the multiple sports fields on campus (Photo 5). The landscaping creates a pastoral feel. There is quite a bit of greenery, atypical of the geographic location. The field looks more like a resort than a school campus, although the fencing around the field does intrude on the resort feel. This image shows a space where students can run free with plenty of space for them to do so. The paved pathways make transportation for the P.E. teachers possible as they navigated between the varying fields on their golf carts.

These photos reveal a luxurious campus. How does this make an impression on the students? I do not think that a student that is acclimated to an educational setting such as the one provided by SCDS would have a hard time compromising the expectation of being in such an environment. A student used to this campus will seek out similar environments upon graduating. A college campus would make for the perfect transition from this situation. In this way,

students are taught by their environment to seek out similar settings. This

necessitates a privileged situation and environment.

Photo 1. The Grounds

Photo 2. The Middle School Area

Photo 3. Student Lockers

Photo 4. The Library

Photo 5. The Sports Fields

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Anyon describes her initial visit to a school site in New Jersey with the following

descritption:

> I reach the school in which I will work with teachers, sign the guest book,
> and look around for the principal, whom I know. Two children run down
> the hall. Seven or eight sit on a bench against a wall. The school guard
> watches them. A group of children run by, nearly knocking me over.
> Several yards away a woman is telling two girls that they have to go home
> because they are late. I ask the guard for the principal, and he points me to
> the main office.
> The door is open; inside is a small room with a long, waist-high wooden
> counter that creates a barrier between the door and two secretaries. This
> small space is filled with people coming and going. Leaning heavily on
> the counter, and yelling angrily at a Hispanic woman is a very
> overweight white man (the principal). His face is flushed and he is
> sweating profusely. More people press into and out of the tiny space,
> moving between us. A woman leans over the barrier from the other side,
> holds out a folder for the principal to see, and says, "He's a 10-year-old
> terror from the hotel (homeless shelter); they're sending him over here."
> The principal responds, "Start the process now. Get him into King
> (another school)." (Anyon, 1997, 14).

This is a far cry from my first impressions of Southwest Country Day

School. SCDS, a place that opens up the world to its students, contrasts heavily to

the schooling experience for students of low socioeconomic status. For such

students, schooling leads to less access to the world and a subtraction of

opportunities and experiences.

How It's Different

 "You're disgusting; you remind me of children I would see in jail or something."

--From *Ghetto Schooling* (Anyon, 1997, 29)

The world afforded to graduates of Southwest Country Day School includes a college education at a prominent four-year college followed by the academic and social background necessary to secure a solid career. The future is exciting and promises economic security as well as options in terms of career choices and life paths.

At SCDS students viewed schooling in a positive light. Students interviewed expressed value of and pride in their schooling. They were successful students and school was their tool to access successful life paths in adulthood. In Ken McGrew's study (2008) at a Wisconsin youth detention facility, students reflected a much different view on school. When asked about how young people at the center felt about school, questions typically, "elicited statements and conversations about the relationship between school failure and self-esteem" (McGrew, 2008, 55). For students at the facility there was a strong correlation between school and being "dumb".

> When I asked a sixteen-year-old African-American boy in a private interview why young people sell drugs he stated that, "They don't want to look dumb. They can't make it in school. They find their own way." By finding their own way, he meant they dropped out.

This connection between school and being "dumb" is directly related to school failure. "For my informants who had left, or who were resolved to leave school, attending school at the center was a constant reminder to them that they were 'dumb' and was an environment where they felt that their educational inadequacies were constantly on display" (McGrew, 2008, 55). Not one student observed or formally interviewed at SCDS joined the idea of school with being

"dumb" or connected schooling with the idea of failure. SCDS was not a place where dropping out of high school was a topic of conversation or a concern for teachers or administrators.

SCDS created a warm, welcoming environment that encouraged students to be their best and to tackle life with confidence, without a fear of failure. Students from impoverished urban and rural neighborhoods do not have this experience. Jean Anyon (1997) reported that, "Almost all of the students I interviewed (at Marcy School) seemed to be in an oppositional stance to their teachers; most were aware that they are in an environment which is hostile and aggressively rejecting of them" (33).

For students of a low socioeconomic background the future is a topic that is associated with an experience that contrasts that of students at SCDS. In a state where the average high school graduation rate in 2008 was roughly 67% (http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=36&year=2008&level=nation&mode=data&state=0), schools such as SCDS graduate nearly 100% of their students into four-year college programs. This puts students from low socioeconomic status at a great disadvantage. "Since 53% of adults living in extreme poverty tracks in American cities have not completed high school they are automatically precluded from participation in the high-wage sectors of the economy" (Anyon, 1997, 5). For these students, schooling is an outlet to deprivation of an education and an insecure economic future that oftentimes includes or leads to incarceration.

For those students who are unsuccessful, school failure does not happen suddenly. There is a pathway to school failure that is lined with disciplinary action and conflicts with authority. Increasingly, this pathway can lead a student down the school-to-prison pipeline. As mentioned previously, recent emphasis on zero tolerance policies in schools have led to increased disciplinary actions such as suspensions as well as increased involvement with law enforcement. Research supports that, "… disciplining elementary and middle school students with out-of-school suspension predicts future suspensions and contributes to students' poor academic performance and failing to graduate on time" and furthermore, "… suspension correlates significantly with a host of negative outcomes, including students' poor academic achievement, grade retention, delinquency, dropping out, disaffection and alienation and drug use" (Wald & Losen, 2003, 25). This same study highlights the fact that out of twenty-five students with multiple suspensions in the same academic year, 40% had been retained a grade at least once and 52% had been in police custody.

Coupled with school suspensions is something referred to as *preventative discipline*, which is the practice of detaining or isolating students thought of as *potentially dangerous*. It is important to emphasize that, "In the past, the relatively minor transgressions that today lead to arrest and expulsion would have been handled internally in the school…" (McGrew, 2008, 19).

> The use of preventative detention in schools- in tandem with the practice of assigning students to school outplacement programs, increased presence of school police officers, and adoption of zero tolerance policies- can prompt actions that restrict and isolate youths in programs and facilities

that do not meet their social and academic needs and that have clear institutional links to the criminal justice system (Wald & Losen, 2008, 55).

Even though not all students may be involved in the criminal justice system, they are still witness to the environment created by the emphasis on discipline and control. Kathleen Nolan and Jean Anyon draw on the parallels between public schooling and jails and the overall environment in such schools:

> Students become used to procedures like hallway sweeps, book-bag and locker searches, 'pat down' and frisks, that treat them like criminals. Prison metaphors used by teachers, administrators, and even students characterize a significant portion of the dialogue. "Students are on lockdown" and "That one [referring to a third grade student] has a cell at Rikers with his name on it" (McGrew, 2008, 19).

For students of low socioeconomic status, discipline and involvement with law enforcement is integrated in the day-to-day schooling experience. This is not the case for students at SCDS. At SCDS, discipline was not observed. Teachers and administrators were not all-powerful authority figures who could dictate your future. They were easily addressed and even confronted. There were no students sitting outside the principal's door awaiting disciplinary action. Teachers did not act as authority figures dispensing referral slips, recommending suspension or asking on campus police officers for assistance with student behavior. In fact, the police officer on the SCDS campus functioned to protect students, especially high profile students, from the dangers posed by the outside world. He did not serve as a liaison between the school and the criminal justice system.

Photo Landscape Comparison

Much has been written on school environments in urban and impoverished neighborhoods. There has been a strong correlation drawn between such schools and a factory-style or prison-like structure. Detailed descriptions reveal dilapidated schools that are often unsanitary and unsafe (Rist, 1973, Anyon, 1997, Kozol, 1991).

Thru my own past and recent experiences working within Title I schools, I have found these claims to hold true. For the typical student of low socioeconomic status, a physical environment such as that of the SCDS campus is not characteristic of the daily experience. In fact, the SCDS images are quite contrary to images of the environments distinctive to students of low socioeconomic status. As with the educational experience experienced by poor students, the school environment is a subtraction of what could be. For example, buildings could be well maintained, but they are not. The school grounds could be well manicured and landscaped with plants and trees, but they are not. The campus could be clean, free of trash, graffiti, and chipping paint on the wall, but is not.

The typical school environment attended by poor students is emotionally taxing, dingy, devoid of natural lighting and reminiscent of a factory or prison. Access to outdoor areas is strictly monitored, fenced in and regulated. Students in most urban schools enter the building through security checks and metal detectors.

Students who find themselves in a juvenile detention setting experience this urban/impoverished school setting. The majority of these students is of a low socioeconomic status and has previously attended such schools in their academic career. The transition to a juvenile detention facility may place such students in an environment that is very similar to what they have already experienced, with the added amount of regulation and monitoring in a more restrictive setting.

Photo 6 provides an impression that is dissimilar to a first impression of SCDS. This place is not inviting. The tall barbed wire fence creates a feeling of enclosure. The location can easily be identified with a prison. As in Photo 1, the fact that school aged children engage in schooling at this location is not discernable. It does not sit right that school aged children interact with this environment. The windows on the sides of the building seem to provide little access to natural light. The grounds are not meticulously manicured. The architectural design is not one that is aesthetically appealing. The design of these buildings is functional. There is no beauty or allure.

Photo 7 depicts students at a detention facility playing basketball on the facility's court. The entire area in enclosed with tall, chain-link fencing. The building set against the court looks like a structure that is used to store lawn mowers or shovels, but it is obvious that these items are not used on these grounds. The little amount of grass visible in the photo is yellow and dead. The basketball hoops appear to be rusting. This picture hardly reflects the freedom and natural appeal visible in Photo 5.

Although not directly a photo of a school on the grounds of a juvenile detention facility, Photo 8 was included because it does bring up essential elements to being within such a setting. The image is pertinent because at such facilities, schooling and living areas are entwined into one location.

This photo depicts an image that is welcoming. It is sterile and confining. There are no decorations on the walls. Students are provided with very small sleeping areas that are completely secured enclosures. The line drawn on the commercial-grade carpet is most likely used to get students in single file as they are escorted to various areas of the facility. The small lines outside of each cell are perhaps marks for where students stand as they wait for instruction to proceed to another location. This image suggests a high level of regulation.

Photo 9 shows a classroom within a juvenile detention facility. The students are organized into rows and face a wall. The wall is actually a partition. I have seen such partitions used in many Title I schools to create smaller classrooms in areas that may not have previously functioned as classrooms. This is often implemented due to overcrowding. On this partition, students in Figure 9 stare at haphazardly placed posters, one being that of a world map. The floor seems to be similar to that of a hospital floor, perhaps linoleum. There is no natural lighting. Because desks are arranged so close to the back wall, there is a again this feeling of being enclosed and confined. Students in this image sit as if punished at the back of the room. The caption that describes this photo reads, "students work during a school session". It is hard to imagine the type of learning

that is proposed in teacher preparation courses taking place in such a setting. Hands-on, stimulating activity is not what is happening in this image.

The stock photo images of juvenile detention facilities are depressing. They evoke a feeling of confinement. These environments are highly restrictive and sterile. They are not well maintained or landscaped. There is no visual appeal. What can one learn from interacting in such an environment? Students in this setting learn to follow rules and authority. Such an environment, experienced daily, can only lead a student to accept such environments in his adult life. Such an environment does not teach a youth offender how to learn and grow as a human being, it teaches him how to exist in a highly regulated environment that leaves little room for him as a person. If the United States did have an influx of factory positions available, the learning experienced at a juvenile detention facility would be very conducive to life within the confines of a factory. Since such jobs are not highly available, the options for these students include a future in an adult facility. A college campus would not provide these students with the rigid structure that they are acclimated to.
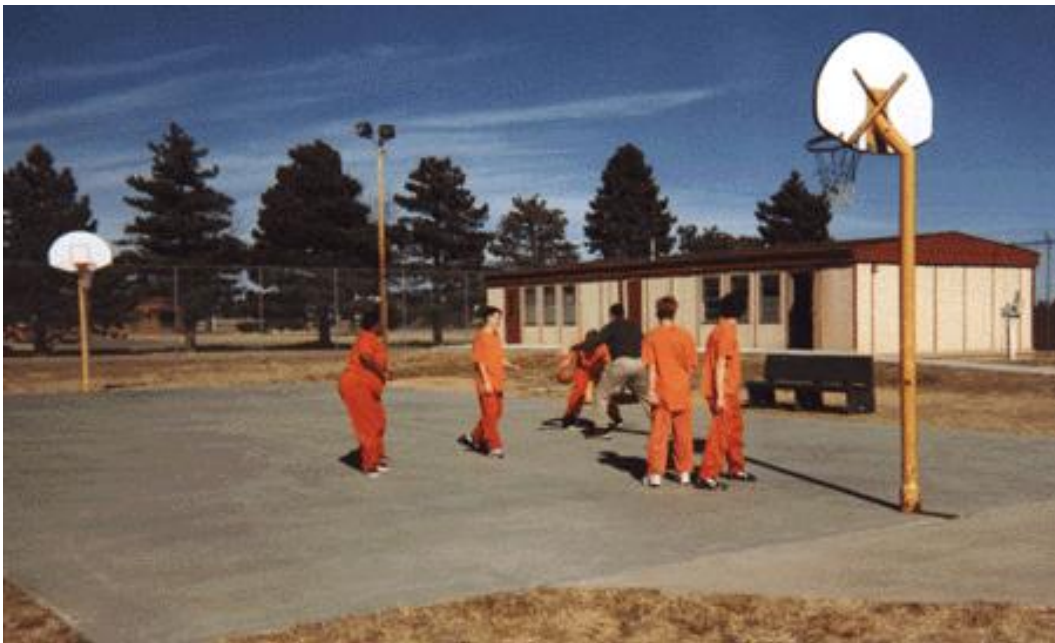
Photo 6. Juvenile Detention Center Campus

Photo 7. Basketball Court

Photo 8. Sleeping Quarters

Photo 9. Classroom Environment

What This Means For Our Children

      The daily experiences of the students at Southwest Country Day School differ vastly from the daily experiences of students from low socioeconomic status. These differences suggest dire consequences for those students who lack the privilege afforded to students who attend SCDS, and schools like it, across the country. Class delineates these differences in experience. As highlighted by McGrew (2008),"In our current historical period society is generally compassionate towards the children of privilege, who enjoy extended periods of adolescence, and are valued and forgiven. Poor children, and children of color in particular, on the other hand, are viewed with a racially charged gaze that defies known human biology in an effort to conceive of them as adults, evil in their motives, and threatening…" and that this conception is often, "… exploited, promoted and at times shared by the professions and industries that benefit from their destruction", as in the prison industrial complex, etc. (168).

      Schooling in the United States is compulsory. For students such as those who attend SCDS, this manifests as options, opportunity and *choosing* to go to a certain school. This certain school leads to economic success in adulthood and opens up the world for these students.

      For students of low socioeconomic status, school is not an option and students are forcibly exposed to conditions that leave them vulnerable to lack of education, a prison-like environment, and an absence of opportunity. The day-to-day for these students can contribute to emotional and physical neglect and

cruelty. For some of these students, school functions as a connection to what has been labeled the "school-to-prison-pipeline". The future outlook for these students is bleak.

There has been a fair amount of research on how schooling differs for students based on socioeconomic status. These studies suggest varying ways to address the problem in hopes of eliminating its existence. One popular approach amongst progressive educators is an attempt at school reform. Some suggest that their needs to be improvement in curriculum, adequate resources provided to all schools, and increased standards for teachers as well as pedagogical approaches.

To build on the notion of school reform, a very specific approach ties in with the works of theorists such as Paulo Freire. This approach demands that education must be relevant to the lives of students. "Rather than ignore their lived experience, curriculum and pedagogy must be designed to help students investigate and challenge the injustice in their lives" and that, "Such an approach to schooling can both contribute to better educational outcomes for these students while producing a generation of young people with the analytical skills and organizational savvy to build political movements in their communities" (McGrew, 2008, 163).

The problem with this approach is that schools do not exist in a vacuum. Schools are situated within a larger system, one whose economy is based on the stratification of class. The few benefit from the exploitation of the majority. This majority provides the labor that leads to the economic proliferation of the privileged class. Within this existing system, not much difference can be

achieved because schools function as a socializing agent that prepares students for their adult positions within the existing hierarchical system. Without addressing this specific system as a whole, educational reforms will have no impact on the future lives of students.

There is a difference between schooling and education. This distinction was made previously in this paper, but it is important to bring the notion back into discussion. Essentially, it is an education that human beings crave as they develop into adulthood. This education being one that caters to individual interests, fuels creativity as well as intellectual growth in addition to ultimately fostering the development of a whole human being. Education does not necessitate the existence of schools and schooling. Reformers look to schools as the potential arena for radical changes in society. Due to the nature of their existence, I would argue that schools couldn't be the place where these changes happen. Schools do a great job of teaching students their position in the pre-existing stratified society. This schooling is multidimensional and is perpetuated by an overarching system.

> Equal educational opportunity is, indeed, both a desirable and a feasible goal, but to equate this with obligatory schooling is to confuse salvation with the church. School has become the world religion of the modernized proletariat, and makes futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age (Illich, 1970, 10)

What Comes Next

The correlation between schooling and socioeconomic status has been consistently demonstrated through over 30 years of research (Anyon, 1997, 164). This problem has persisted, with the addition of the element of incarceration. The underprivileged students of today face the additional threat of involvement with the prison industrial complex, society's solution to the problem of a lack of menial jobs in production. This study serves to expose a need for further research. Future studies need to examine both the deficiencies in the schooling experience of underprivileged students as well as the experience of students fortunate enough to be a part of the privileged class. Future research needs to highlight and expose these differences to an audience that goes beyond the limitations of the academic arena. Academia should seek to validate what students of low socioeconomic status, such as my friend's son Elias, already know about their schooling and life experience by making space for them in the dialogue.

Research alone will not bring about the radical changes in the current situation. The problem addressed in this study stems from an overarching social issue. The existence of poverty is profitable for those who reap the benefits of its existence. In order to make real changes in the lives of the students who suffer from the consequences of poverty, research can only be a first step. A creative and novel approach to the issue of poverty and the perpetuation of class is essential. Without the elimination of poverty and the class system, there can be no real changes in the lives of underprivileged students. In fact, as the capitalist

economy continues to evolve, these students face a future more bleak then that of a factory worker. More and more of these students face a life devastated by involvement in the school-to-prison pipeline. There is a need for more than simply a contribution from academic educational researchers to actually impact the perpetuation of this problem. What this contribution looks like demands both exploration as well as immediate action.

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
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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD CONSENT

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Eric Margolis
             ED

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
             Soc Beh IRB

Date: 04/20/2009

Committee Action: **Expedited Approval**

Approval Date: 04/20/2009

Review Type: Expedited F7

IRB Protocol #:   0903003818

Study Title: School Environment and Student Success

Expiration Date: 04/19/2010

The above-referenced protocol was approved following expedited review by the Institutional Review Board.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without approval by the Institutional Review Board.

Adverse Reactions: If any untoward incidents or severe reactions should develop as a result of this study, you are required to notify the Soc Beh IRB immediately. If necessary a member of the IRB will be assigned to look into the matter. If the problem is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending IRB review.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, or the investigators, please communicate your requested changes to the Soc Beh IRB. The new procedure is not to be initiated until the IRB approval has been given.

Please retain a copy of this letter with your approved protocol.

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APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INTENT

School Environment and Student Success

Dear Parent:

I am currently a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Eric Margolis in the Mary Lou Fulton College of Education at Arizona State University. I have also been a classroom teacher for three years. I am conducting a research study to identify those elements of schooling and the school environment that contribute to student success.

I am inviting your child's participation, which will involve being interviewed. This study will be conducted for the span of two months and will not interfere with the daily classroom activity and schedule in any way. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to have your child participate or to withdraw your child from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. Likewise, if your child chooses not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. The results of the research study may be published but the name of both the school as well as your child will remain anonymous. If your child does not participate, she will remain in the classroom but will not be interviewed nor will she be the focus of observation. She will continue to receive the educational experience that has thus far been a part of her daily experience this school year.

Although there may be no direct benefit to your child, the possible benefit of your child's participation is that the research may contribute to current educational research on student success. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts from your child's participation in the study.

Student names will be altered for the sake of the study and all responses will be kept anonymous. The result of the study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your child's name will not be known or used. The results of the study will be shared with a thesis committee composed of three faculty members at Arizona State University.

If you have any questions concerning the research study or your child's participation in this study, please call me at (517)-977-7133

Sincerely,

Eftyhia Theodoropoulos

By signing below, you are giving permission for your child _____ (Child's name) to participate in the above study.

_____   _____ _____
Signature   Printed Name   Date

If you have any questions about you or your child's rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you or your child have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

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