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World Alienation and Privilege During Social Studies Class at an Elite School

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World Alienation and Privileged Oneness

Social studies class in a school where neither problems, failures nor misfortunes are exposed



About

An observational study focusing students' (in)action in a classroom of Social Science Education during upper secondary school.

Empirical setting: A school characterized by top grades, expressed desire of achieving economical and career-related success, fame and wealth.

Empirical findings

Characteristics of education in social science:

- Conventional (teacher led, lecture form, history-based, focused on hard-fact, statistic-driven)
- Imply-Response-Evaluation-formula-based education
- Controversies are suppressed
- Students follow instructions
- Students meet the demands of the education

Ideal at the school:

"Work Hard! Be Nice! Dream Big!"

Analysis

A classroom of performed "oneness": high-achieving, wealthy-acting, well-behaving students.

No presence of the "other", no performed disparity, no low-achieving, poor or interruptive students that creates disharmony, friction or breaks the homogeneity.

Students learn to keep apart *what* they learn from *who* they are, *what* they want to become and *how* they will act.

Theoretical input

Hannah Arendt's concept "World Alienation" – turning away from the political, from the world, from the social in lack of plural interaction.

Simone de Beauvoir's analysis of privilege and the other as basis for an ethic of ambiguity relevant for social science education.

Jean-Paul Sartre's nothingness, nilling and un-authentic un-interest in the other as a grounding ideal for the students.

