

IDEA 59 Culturally Relevant Teaching: Solving the paradox: Education as both a barrier and solution to full participation in society for urban youth

Why do black youth reject school despite knowing its importance?

Society makes it simple: work hard, follow the rules and success will come. This idea is portrayed as America's central ideology: Success=opportunity + effort.

African American students and their families, like most other Americans, accept this. Although students accept it, they ultimately reject this formula of status attainment proposed and promoted by schools.

Students tell adults they want to be middle class, but are unable to translate their attitudes into behaviors. They adopt the idea of the central success ideology, but don't act on it. Many fail to invest in school because they don't see it as paying off in the marketplace.

The good news is: Black students will conform to school expectations if they have hope--hope that they will have a place in the mainstream economy.

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