Changing Classes

How do schools influence the kind of person a child becomes? Changing Classes tells the story of a small, poor, ethnically mixed school district in Michigan’s rust belt, a community in turmoil over the announced closing of a nearby auto assembly plant. As teachers and administrators began to find ways to make schooling more relevant to working-class children, two large-scale school reform initiatives swept into town: the governor’s “marketplace” reforms and the National Science Foundation’s “State Systemic Initiative.” All this is set against the backdrop of the transformation to a global, post-Fordist economy. The result is an account of the complex linkages at work as society structures the development of children to adulthood.

Martin Packer is Associate Professor of Psychology at Duquesne University.
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Changing Classes

School Reform and the New Economy

MARTIN PACKER

Duquesne University
What is at stake is our vision of the kinds of human beings we would hope Americans to be in the last years of the twentieth and the first years of the twenty-first centuries, and of the kinds of education that will help bring those human beings into existence.

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Series Foreword

This series for Cambridge University Press is becoming widely known as an international forum for studies of situated learning and cognition.

Innovative contributions are being made by anthropology, by cognitive, developmental, and cultural psychology, by computer science, by education, and by social theory. These contributions are providing the basis for new ways of understanding the social, historical, and contextual nature of the learning, thinking, and practice that emerges from human activity. The empirical settings of these research inquiries range from the classroom to the workplace, to the high technology office, and to learning in the streets and in other communities of practice.

The situated nature of learning and remembering through activity is a central fact. It may appear obvious that human minds develop in social situations and extend their sphere of activity and communicative competencies. But cognitive theories of knowledge representation and learning alone have not provided sufficient insight into these relationships.

This series was born of the conviction that new and exciting interdisciplinary synthesizes are underway as scholars and practitioners from diverse fields seek to develop theory and empirical investigations adequate for characterizing the complex relations of social and mental life, and for understanding successful learning wherever it occurs. The series invites contributions that advance our understanding of these seminal issues.

Roy Pea
John Seely Brown
Christian Heath
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Changing Classes