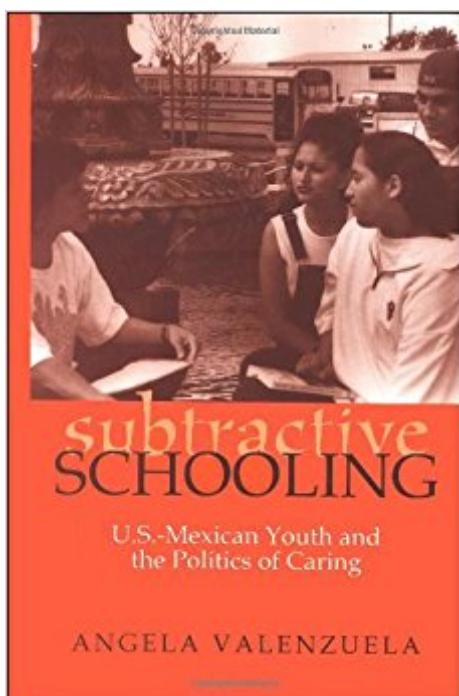


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Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth And The Politics Of Caring



Synopsis

Subtractive Schooling provides a framework for understanding the patterns of immigrant achievement and U.S.-born underachievement frequently noted in the literature and observed by the author in her ethnographic account of regular-track youth attending a comprehensive, virtually all-Mexican, inner-city high school in Houston. Valenzuela argues that schools subtract resources from youth in two major ways: firstly by dismissing their definition of education and secondly, through assimilationist policies and practices that minimize their culture and language. A key consequence is the erosion of students' social capital evident in the absence of academically oriented networks among acculturated, U.S.-born youth.

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Customer Reviews

Valenzuela's thoughtful and thorough analysis of Latino/a students' experiences in a large urban school powerfully defines the educational challenges facing Latino immigrant and U.S.-born youth and outlines important elements for transforming their academic experiences. *Harvard Educational Review* Professor Valenzuela's book suggests what has to change fundamentally for real reform to occur. This ethnography highlights teacher practices that need to be emulated and rewarded. There are models for becoming an effective teacher with Latino/a and other minority students. Overall, *Subtractive Schooling* is a valuable text that is certain to become a standard in sociology courses in the areas of education, race and ethnicity, and Latino/a studies. *Contemporary Sociology* What

gives credibility to Valenzuela's powerful account is excellent ethnohistorical documentation and a profound knowledge of youth's thought processes. The selection of eloquent and vivid descriptions of the relationships between students and teachers or counselors permits the reader to internalize, from the students perspective, the meaning of institutional neglect, hostility, and prejudice on the part of school personnel. Qualitative Studies in Education every government representative, whether at the local, state, or federal level, including the President of the United States, should read this book. Maybe then subtractive schooling would be seen for what it is really worth by people who have the power to subtract it from American society, and to replace it with policies of bilingualism and biculturalism. Bilingual Education and Bilingualism In focusing her attention on caring Valenzuela provides an important vantage point from which to consider and understand the implications of educational policies and practices designed to move youngsters into the so-called American mainstream. Anthropology and Education Quarterly a powerful and important addition to the literature on multi-cultural secondary schooling Subtractive Schooling greatly increases our understanding of the intricate complexity of ethnicity and schooling practices. At the same time, it provides a model for a more authentically caring approach to ethnography as well as a more authentically caring style of teaching. Bilingual Research Journal groundbreaking Race and Pedagogy Project Subtractive Schooling is an astonishing book. It focuses unblinkingly on the harsh underbelly of the American educational tradition a history that begins with Indian Boarding Schools where youngsters were systematically stripped of their language, their spiritual practices, their families and communities, and continues today in many urban schools where nothing about students families, communities, or experiences is deemed worthy by officials of constructing a meaningful educational practice. It adds important detail and description of a process that attempts to break children as a prerequisite to teaching them. While the concept of caring in schools has become a banal cliche, a tabula rasa upon which anyone democratic or authoritarian, progressive or reactionary can scribble anything at all, Angela Valenzuela rescues the concept from complete vacuousness and insists on caring as linked to social justice, caring as political. Valenzuela has done important work that, if taken seriously, can save lives. William Ayers The strong, beautiful writing in this book should be a potent antidote to the enormous tide of shallow propaganda coming from the English only forces. It's a powerfully documented work of scholarship, but wonderfully accessible and richly interwoven with affectionate and vivid narrative. I hope it's given the attention it deserves. Jonathan Kozol This beautifully written book provides powerful documentation of the conditions under which many children of color try to get an education in this country. It should be read by both educators and policy-makers. And then something should be done! Nel Noddings, Lee

Jacks Professor of Education, Emerita, Stanford University and Professor of Philosophy and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University Valenzuela's credible first-hand account of the struggles of Mexican and Chicano high school students brings about a better understanding of underachievement of Latino youth, their feeling of neglect, and their call for help. This volume is a solid sociological study beyond conventional quantitative analysis. It brings the readers into the school and makes them feel in their own flesh the dilemma faced by Latino high school students. An extraordinary contribution; one of a kind. A volume that must be read by teachers and researchers alike. Henry Trueba, coeditor of *Ethnic Identity and Power* "Valenzuela's thoughtful and thorough analysis of Latino/a students' experiences in a large urban school powerfully defines the educational challenges facing Latino immigrant and U.S.-born youth and outlines important elements for transforming their academic experiences." -- *Harvard Educational Review* "Professor Valenzuela's book suggests what has to change fundamentally for real reform to occur. This ethnography highlights teacher practices that need to be emulated and rewarded. There are models for becoming an effective teacher with Latino/a and other minority students. Overall *Subtractive Schooling* is a valuable text that is certain to become a standard in sociology courses in the areas of education, race and ethnicity, and Latino/a studies." -- *Contemporary Sociology* "What gives credibility to Valenzuela's powerful account is excellent ethnohistorical documentation and a profound knowledge of youth's thought processes. The selection of eloquent and vivid descriptions of the relationships between students and teachers or counselors permits the reader to internalize, from the students' perspective, the meaning of institutional neglect, hostility, and prejudice on the part of school personnel." -- *Qualitative Studies in Education* .."every government representative, whether at the local, state, or federal level, including the President of the United States, should read this book. Maybe then subtractive schooling would be seen for what it is really worth by people who have the power to 'subtract' it from American society, and to replace it with policies of bilingualism and biculturalism." -- *Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* "In focusing her attention on caring ... Valenzuela provides an important vantage point from which to consider and understand the implications of educational policies and practices designed to move youngsters into the so-called American mainstream." -- *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* .."a powerful and important addition to the literature on multi-cultural secondary schooling ... *Subtractive Schooling* greatly increases our understanding of the intricate complexity of ethnicity and schooling practices. At the same time, it provides a model for a more authentically caring approach to ethnography as well as a more authentically caring style of teaching." -- *Bilingual Research Journal* .."groundbreaking..." -- *Race and Pedagogy Project* "Subtractive Schooling is an astonishing book. It focuses unblinkingly

on the harsh underbelly of the American educational tradition--a history that begins with Indian Boarding Schools where youngsters were systematically stripped of their language, their spiritual practices, their families and communities, and continues today in many urban schools where nothing about students' families, communities, or experiences is deemed worthy by officials of constructing a meaningful educational practice. It adds important detail and description of a process that attempts to break children as a prerequisite to teaching them. "While the concept of 'caring' in schools has become a banal cliche, a tabula rasa upon which anyone--democratic or authoritarian, progressive or reactionary--can scribble anything at all, Angela Valenzuela rescues the concept from complete vacuousness and insists on caring as linked to social justice, caring as political. Valenzuela has done important work that, if taken seriously, can save lives." -- William Ayers "The strong, beautiful writing in this book should be a potent antidote to the enormous tide of shallow propaganda coming from the 'English only' forces. It's a powerfully documented work of scholarship, but wonderfully accessible and richly interwoven with affectionate and vivid narrative. I hope it's given the attention it deserves." -- Jonathan Kozol "This beautifully written book provides powerful documentation of the conditions under which many children of color try to get an education in this country. It should be read by both educators and policy-makers. And then something should be done!" -- Nel Noddings, Lee Jacks Professor of Education, Emerita, Stanford University and Professor of Philosophy and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University "Valenzuela's credible first-hand account of the struggles of Mexican and Chicano high school students brings about a better understanding of underachievement of Latino youth, their feeling of neglect, and their call for help. This volume is a solid sociological study beyond conventional quantitative analysis. It brings the readers into the school and makes them feel in their own flesh the dilemma faced by Latino high school students. An extraordinary contribution; one of a kind. A volume that must be read by teachers and researchers alike." -- Henry Trueba, coeditor of *Ethnic Identity and Power*

Angela Valenzuela received the Outstanding Book Award for her book entitled: *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring* at the American Educational Research Association's Annual Meeting held in New Orleans, Louisiana, April 24-28th. The Award was established for the best book-length publication in educational research and development. To be considered for the Award, a book must be concerned with the improvement of the educational process through research or scholarly inquiry and must have a research base. The author or another scholar may nominate a book as specified in the *Educational Researcher* journal received by all AERA members. Committee Chair, P. David Pearson of Michigan State University will present

Dr. Valenzuela with the Award. Among past recipients of the Award are: Stephen Jay Gould and Carol Gilligan; James C. Coleman and Thomas Hoffer; Burton R. Clark and David F. Labaree; David Tyack, Elizabeth Hansot, Teun A. Van Dijk, and Idit Harel; Joan DelFattore and Jonathan Kozol; and David C. Berliner and Bruce Biddle. The book was selected because, according to P. David Pearson, the head of the selection committee, "It takes a provocative cluster of issues in American education -- race, power, and language -- beyond the usual rhetoric and adopts a fresh and thoughtful perspective." It also uses a complex array of methodological tools to address a complex issue. Most important, the voice of the researcher is clear, strong, and compelling. "This is a book that dares you to read it," Pearson added, "and once inside, it will not let you go until you have finished it." --American Educational Research Association Press Release, April 26, 2000

I read this book for my Masters in Teaching program and really enjoyed it! It was one of the few books I looked forward to reading every week. I majored in Anthropology in college, so this book felt very familiar in the way it treated the problems the school was having. It's an interesting look at how the schooling "system" can harm students unintentionally and how knowing who your students are and making efforts to get to know them is important beyond just the classroom, but for school administrators and just everyone else in the school. This particular school has a problem because the people who have the power (teachers, administrators, counselors, etc) are so overwhelmed that they do not show the students that they care about them. There are a few exceptions, but the idea of subtractive schooling essentially means that students are worse off going to this school, than if they drop out, so over half of the student population (at the time in 1994) was doing just that. The first chapter is difficult to get through because it uses so much academic language and every sentence counts; I think it's like 30 pages, but it took me 3 hours! But keep reading! The reading gets easier because it changes to a conversational type tone when it switches into ethnographic writing.

Very insightful and well written.

I like the concept of this book, but unfortunately Valenzuela repeats a lot of her information. The first chapter or so is very research heavy, which is sort of annoying. I liked understanding the story behind this book and I wish there was more of that. I had to read this book for my Master's in Teaching program. I don't recommend reading the whole book, but some chapters were eye opening. (Note: if you don't like authors jumping back and forth between another language

(Spanish) and English, I don't recommend this book to them since Valenzuela does a lot of that, unless you are forced to read this book by a professor).

This book is informative and well written. It is conversational and informative, however, the information is almost 20 years old.

I needed to have this book in a hurry. It arrived quickly. I purchased this one because the price was the lowest, the condition was better than I expected for that price.

Subtractive Schooling was written by Angela Valenzuela after she completed an ethnographic study of schooling conditions in an inner-city Houston high school. The high school was majority Mexican and Mexican-American students. She investigated the differences between immigrant student achievement and that of U.S.-born Mexican students to understand why immigrant students consistently out perform their peers. Her study revealed cultural differences between the Anglo and Mexican understandings of what education should be, indicating that white teachers what students to care about school while Mexican students wanted to feel like their teachers authentically cared about them as people. The schooling practices tended to degrade the Mexican culture and Spanish language which has ultimately led to the subtraction of culture resources of Mexican students, particularly those students who are later generation U.S.-born and have felt the impact of the dominant culture on their lives longer than recently immigrated students. This book is a worthwhile read as it gives great insight into how schooling practices themselves contribute to the underachievement of certain student groups and shows the impact that true multicultural education can have on the learning environment.

Excellent book. Anyone interesting in the educational system should read this.

Great book!!

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