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Paper 1: Prospectus

Jean Anyon's work problematizes class in the United States. She forces us to recognize that the social structure is sustained by the different types of education offered the different classes. In the abstract, I understand that, but I ask *how* education does this. Is there really much evidence that supports her idea? Was her idea only legitimate 40 years ago? What has changed that might change the insights? This still leave open the question of who benefits from class and the new ways it is shaped in the U.S. Lots of associated questions occur to me: who benefits from this; how long do changes in the relationship between class and education take to emerge?

Comment [HC1]: This is the "Problem Statement" from the Purpose & Problem" document. Note that it gives the question/problem/issue that is tentatively answered in what follows below.

Jean Anyon's work problematizes class in the United States. She forces us to recognize that the social structure is sustained by the different types of education offered the different social classes. The mechanisms for producing and reinforcing these differences are the differences in the behavioral and curricular features of k-12 education. Because I grew up in a working class family, I see that this process often makes it impossible for people to exercise their talents, find work that "fits" their interests, and offers them real choices. Anyon is careful not to say that one form of education is better than the other, but there is an underlying sense that the upper class has knowledge that is larger and more complex than that of the working class; on one hand, I accept that viewpoint, but on the other, I see her work as retreating to an underlying sense of the individual as being "wronged" by the culture. In my more ruthless moments, I weigh the damage to individuals – if it is damage – against the horrors of social chaos, and I say that the tension between the individual and the social is a feature of industrial life that cannot be overcome. It's an integral feature of an industrial society.