

Michel Foucault (Key Sociologists)

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ARTICLE

Explaining the Failure of an Obesity Intervention: Combining Bourdieu's Symbolic Violence and the Foucault's Microphysics of Power to Reconsider State Interventions

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This paper explains the failure of an obesity intervention funded by a Carol M. White U.S. Department of Education grant which created a three way partnership between middle schools in a poor largely Latino school district, the local University, and local after-school care providers. This paper assesses the project and situates it theoretically using Foucault's microphysics of power and Bourdieu's concepts of capital to analyze the refusal of most students and teachers to engage in the program and the standardized testing required by the state. We further articulate a new form of Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence based on position in the consumer hierarchy. We conclude with a critique of grant mechanisms as a means of addressing health issues, and situate the obesity epidemic as a social construction that perpetuates inequality and discourses of power.

Cet article explique l'échec d'une intervention financée par une subvention Carol M. White du Ministère de l'Éducation Américain. Cette intervention qui ciblait l'obésité a créé un partenariat tripartite entre des écoles de cycle intermédiaire d'un district scolaire pauvre largement Latino, l'Université locale, et les fournisseurs de soins d'après école de l'endroit. Cet article évalue le projet et le situe au niveau théorique en utilisant l'idée d'une microphysique du pouvoir de Foucault et les concepts de capital proposés par Bourdieu afin d'analyser le refus de la plupart des étudiants et enseignants de s'impliquer dans le programme et de passer les tests standardisés requis par l'état. Nous mettons également de l'avant le concept de violence symbolique emprunté à Bourdieu et présenté sous une nouvelle forme basée sur la position dans la hiérarchie de consommation. Nous concluons par une critique du fonctionnement des subventions comme moyen d'aborder les problèmes de santé et proposons que l'épidémie d'obésité est une construction sociale qui perpétue les inégalités et les discours de pouvoir.

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