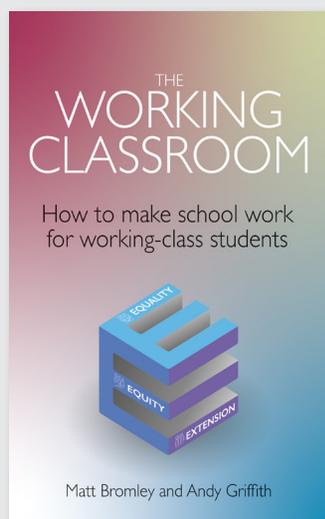


P R E S S R E L E A S E

“Essential reading for anyone concerned about the disadvantage gap in schools. It is both sensitive and punchy: sensitive in its framing of the considerable disadvantages for many pupils and punchy in its bold, yet workable suggestions for addressing these.”

– Mary Myatt, education writer, speaker and curator of Myatt & Co



The Working Classroom

How to make school work for working-class students

By Matt Bromley and Andy Griffith

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Offers practical strategies and tools to help secondary schools address the needs of working-class students, including by building cultural capital and designing learning that is more engaging to working-class students.

How can we make school work for working-class students?

Working-class students are disadvantaged by the education system, not by accident but by design. That's the bold claim of two experienced educationalists in their new book on the disadvantage gap in schools, *The Working Classroom*.

Similarly, in a debate around what a socially just education would look like, Cambridge University Professor of Education Diane Reay writes that “Working-class children get less of everything in education – including respect.”¹ Those who work in the education sector have a moral obligation to do something – and urgently – to address this situation. It’s unacceptable simply to stand by and let the class and wealth divide continue to grow in a society where wealth and social status, rather than ability and effort, dictate educational attainment and success in later life. Reay goes on to say that “If you’re a working-class child, you’re starting the race halfway round the track behind the middle-class child. Middle-class parents do a lot via extra resources and activities.”²

Schools do amazing work to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds, but in their powerful new book *The Working Classroom*, Matt Bromley and Andy Griffith enable teachers and school leaders to do more. Matt and Andy firmly believe the education system is rigged in favour of the privileged. Working-class students are disadvantaged from day one: all too often their birth is their destiny; they start at a disadvantage and end at a disadvantage. This disadvantage comes in many forms but cultural poverty, where some students have relative knowledge gaps compared with their more affluent peers, can be addressed successfully by schools.

The only way to truly fix inequality is, of course, by reducing inequality. Although the authors acknowledge that the systemic nature of inequality requires society at large to change, there are actions that school leaders and teachers can take now to help working-class students compete equitably at school and in later life.

The authors say: “We need to be deliberate in how we design our core curriculum, how we plan and target curriculum interventions, how we design curriculum enhancements, and how we train staff and interact with parents and other stakeholders.”

The Working Classroom explores some practical ways that schools can mitigate some of the effects of classism and help working-class students to get a better start in life, so that ability and effort, not where you are born

1 D. Reay, 'Working-class children get less of everything in education – including respect', The Guardian, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/nov/21/english-class-system-shaped-in-schools>

2 D. Reay, 'Working-class children get less of everything in education – including respect', The Guardian, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/nov/21/english-class-system-shaped-in-schools>

P R E S S R E L E A S E

and how much money you inherit, dictate success in school and in later life. The book details practical ways in which schools can close these knowledge gaps and, in so doing, create a socially just education system – one that builds on the rich heritage of the working class, rather than seeing their background as a weakness. It offers practical ways for students and families to build on the best of working-class culture, whilst also empowering teachers, students and parents to change the system.

This book focus on three strands of support that schools can offer to help counter the classism that is inherent in the education system:

- Equality through the core curriculum and extra-curricular activities.
- Equity through curriculum adaptations and interventions.
- Extension through curriculum extras and enhancements.

The Working Classroom aims to help teachers and school leaders make more of a difference, more of the time. Backed up by research and case studies, the book is a practical resource that is easy to dip into when help and advice are needed most. The authors draw on their own experiences of working in and supporting schools in challenging circumstances, including working directly with working-class students and their parents.

Suitable for both teachers and leaders in a secondary school or sixth form college setting who seek to support social change in education.

“This is an excellent book: very well referenced, analytical, packed with stories and providing a commanding compendium of practical ideas for the classroom.”

– Roy Blatchford, Chair of ASCL’s *The Forgotten Third* and author of *The A – Z of Great Classrooms*.

About the authors



Matt Bromley is an education writer and advisor with over twenty years’ experience in teaching and leadership including as a secondary school headteacher, FE college vice principal, and multi-academy trust director. Matt is a journalist, public speaker, ITT lecturer, and school improvement advisor. He also remains a practising teacher, working in secondary, FE and HE settings. Matt writes for various magazines, is the author of numerous best-selling books on education, and co-hosts the award-winning SecEd podcast.



Andy Griffith has a proven track record for creating high impact training courses and interventions with students, teachers and leaders. His major career motivation is for education to be an engine for social justice. In the past seven years, alongside his school development work, Andy has developed programmes for students that have had a positive impact on their academic results as well as building their cultural capital.

Articles and interviews available

Matt and Andy are available for interview, expert comment or by-lined articles on a range of topics, such as:

- Going the Extra-Curricular Mile: why out of school trips and experiences is a social justice issue
- What is Classism and how should this be taught in schools?
- What can we do to make secondary school work better for working-class students?
- How to ensure inclusion for working-class students: Equality, equity, extension
- How to build cultural capital to help working-class students compete in school and later life
- Achieving equity in schools through adaptive teaching approaches and curriculum interventions
- The North-South divide: what needs to change in education policy?
- Why positive discrimination is necessary for working-class children

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