

BIG IDEAS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD OF DISABILITY

Pierre Bourdieu

WORKSHOP 9. Information Pack

What is your capital?

Presented by

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About the Workshop

About Steffen & Gertraud

About Pierre Bourdieu

The Trump Tower activity

Key words for this workshop

About the Workshop

This workshop is in partnership with the Universities of Koblenz and Leipzig in Germany.

Agenda:

1. Saying hallo - your name and ONE thing you want to tell us.
2. Steffen and Gertraud will give a short talk with some slides.
3. We will have questions and discussion during the talk
4. The Trump Tower: Let's build houses for different famous people!
5. Discussion - what does this mean to you?
6. Final thoughts

ABOUT STEFFEN

I work at the University of Leipzig at the QUABIS project. I am interested in how people with and without disabilities live and work together. I am also interested in the history of disability.

ABOUT GERTRAUD

I work at the University of Koblenz. Even though I now live in Germany I am originally from Austria. I am interested in power, and violence, inclusive research and disability studies.

Background – Pierre Bourdieu

He lived in France. He was interested in how we distinguish people in our daily lives. He found out that we can actually see to which group people belong. We can see it by the clothes they wear. Or how they behave. Or at which restaurants they eat. Or how they talk. This is what he called “habitus”.

He is also famous for his capital theory. Most people think that “capital” always means money. But Bourdieu says: Capital is much more than money. For example: The friends we have are worth more than money can buy. The same is true for some skills we have. For example for knowing not only how to read, but also how to use the knowledge written in a book.

Bourdieu’s questions

Why do we act like we do?

What are we worth (that can’t be paid with money)?

How do we show others how much we are worth?

Activity: The Trump Tower

Let's build a house!

Habitus consists of different forms of capital. That's very complicated! Let's break it down by building a house for different famous people.

- The floor of the house is the economic capital of this person. Does he or she have much money?
- The left wall is the social capital. Does he or she have many friends and networks?
- The right wall is the embodied cultural capital. How much does this person know?
- The back wall is the objectified cultural capital. Does this person have a lot of skills, e.g. reading books or knowing how to saw?
- The front wall is the institutionalised cultural capital. Does this person have a lot of academic titles? Or did he or she go to a good school?
- The roof is the summary of all these forms of capital. It is this persons' symbolic capital.

We use different materials for building our house:

- Wooden blocks are the nicest material. They are used for those people who have the most capital.
- Duplo blocks are in the middle: they are not too good and not too bad.
- Toilet paper rolls are the worst material. We use it for those people who have no or only low capital.

And those are the people we build houses for:

Donald Trump:

He is the former president of the United States. If you don't know who he is, you can find more info about him here:

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/donald-trump>

Cinderella

She is the main character of a fairy tale. Some might know her from our workshop on Spivak's big idea 😊. If you don't know her, you can find more info about her here:

<https://www.bedtimeshortstories.com/cinderella-short-story>

Mahatma Gandhi

He was a civil rights leader in India. If you don't know who he is, you can find more info about him here:

https://www.ducksters.com/biography/mohandas_gandhi.php

Key words

These definitions try to explain how we usually understand words that are important to Bourdieu's ideas.

• **Habitus**

Every person has a habitus. It is shown by how a person acts. Or which manners a person has. Or which taste. Or which posture. Habitus helps us to identify to which social group a person belongs.

• **Capital**

Is something we own. Most people think about money if they think about capital. But Bourdieu says that's not all. That's why he introduces different forms of capital.

- **Economic capital**: Money or things we can buy and sell
- **Social capital**: Our friends, our families and the networks we can build on
- **Cultural capital**: Our education, our knowledge and our experience. Cultural capital consists of three forms:
 - Embodied cultural capital**: our knowledge and our experience
 - Objectified cultural capital**: The skills we have for operating with different objects. For example: I own a book. This is an object. But the book is worth nothing if I don't know how to read it.
 - Institutionalised cultural capital**: Symbols for one's education. For example: academic titles or school certificates.
- **Symbolic capital**: is used as an umbrella term for economic capital, social capital and cultural capital all together.