

Sociology class notes for exam 3

History of Education in the U.S.

- The industrial revolution was an important influence
- Mass education first emphasized work-related skills but expanded to include abstract learning like math, science, literature, and critical thinking
- Education at all levels (particularly college) is being pressured to revert back to a focus on skills and away from broader education that teaches student critical thinking and how to learn new information
- Functionalism: functions of education
 - **Education:** the social institutions through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, analytic skills, job skills, and cultural norms and values
 - Manifest function: to educate students on the formal curriculum
 - Latent functions: socialization through informal/hidden curriculum, provide child care, promote marriage (college), social integration, cultural innovation (universities)
- Conflict theory view of education
 - Social reproduction: educational systems can replicate systems of inequality across generations
 - Tracking: dividing students into groups according to ability of future plans
 - ❖ Intention: tailor a student's educational experience to his or her particular goals
 - ❖ Frequent consequences: reinforces and perpetuates stratification
 - Self-fulfilling prophecy/Pygmalion effects: behavior is modified to meet preexisting expectations
 - Pygmalion effect:
 - ❖ Can result from tracking
 - ❖ Self-fulfilling prophecy in which students tracked into higher (or lower) ability groups perform better (or worse) than they would have otherwise
 - Tracking and inequality
 - ❖ Low SES and minority students less likely to be tracked into advanced classes than high SES
 - ❖ Most qualified teachers assigned to advanced classes
 - ❖ Lower tracks: more emphasis on behavior/obedience than critical thinking and independent learning
- Educational inequality in the U.S.
 - Huge achievement gaps by race and income in the U.S.
 - Race gap has declined but income gap has widened
 - Schools in high-poverty areas have access to fewer educational resources, facilities, and college-prep opportunities and less experienced teachers and administrative staff compared to low poverty areas

- School funding and “Savage Inequalities”
 - Schools in more affluent areas offer better schooling than poor communities
 - How schools are funded in the U.S.
 - ❖ Mainly state and local funds
 - ❖ Property taxes
 - ❖ Creates inequality
 - Answers?
 - ❖ State equalized funding
 - ❖ Vouchers: Edchoice Ohio

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The Family and Educational Inequality

- Coleman report: the family and SES matters more than school environment/funding to academic success
- Family educational resources (money, help with homework)
- Cultural capital and “concerted cultivation” – cultural knowledge

Neighborhood, poverty, crime and education

- This American life: Harper High in Chicago
- Difficult for even well-funded high quality schools with committed staff to overcome effects of poverty and crime
- School resources/funding not panacea for broader inequality, neighborhood poverty and crime but it would likely be much worse if not for schools
- Doug Downey’s research on summer vs. school year SES achievement gaps
- Harper high and tavernise article:
 - Educational inequality is a symptom of broader levels of inequality and high rates of poverty in the U.S.
 - Infusion of money into schools without more broadly addressing poverty and lack of economic opportunity in poor communities will not solve educational inequality
 - Families matter too-concerted cultivation; but inequalities in family process are also likely influenced by poverty