SIXTH EDITION

SCHOOLS and SOCIETY

A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION

JEANNE H. BALLANTINE
JOAN Z. SPADE
JENNY M. STUBER

Schools and Society

Sixth Edition

To the next generation, our grandchildren, Cosette, Chloe, Joseph, Daniel, Corinne, Hannah, Caleb, Kai, and Ayla Brynn

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Schools and Society

A Sociological Approach to Education

Sixth Edition

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Preface

The challenge we struggled with as we selected material for this book was how to present sociology of education to students in a way that contains both a synopsis and a balanced picture of a complex field. As a result, we created this text to provide students with an overview of the scope, perspectives, and issues in the sociology of education. We drew on our many years of experience in researching, publishing, and teaching sociology of education. Our goal was to involve students by presenting well-rounded and provocative summaries of major areas in the field. Individual readings include a combination of classical foundations in the field, noted contemporary authors, and current issues most often discussed by instructors. The most frequently taught topics, according to survey data, are stratification, the social context of education, schools as organizations, and diversity in education (American Sociological Association, 2004). Issues related to these topics are addressed throughout the book.

Schools and Society is designed to appeal to both graduate and upper-level undergraduate students. The text is divided into 11 chapters that begin with introductions outlining issues in the topic area and summarizing how the readings that follow fit into the topic areas. The readings, written by leading scholars, are presented within a systematic framework that provides an overview of the field. These readings introduce major theoretical perspectives and include classic studies, current issues, and applications of knowledge to particular educational problems. Although this book is not about educational policy per se, many of the readings have practical and policy implications for education.

To accomplish the goal of presenting a comprehensive and theoretically balanced overview of the field, we selected readings that

1. illustrate major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and the complexity of education, including how to study it and how it has been studied;
2. blend classic studies with newer, sometimes controversial topics;
3. apply to students who are likely to take the course in various majors—sociology, education, and others;
4. exhibit writing at a level of sophistication appropriate to students in advanced undergraduate or graduate courses;
5. concentrate on materials drawn from a wide range of sources, including books, journals, scientific studies and reports, and commentaries; and
6. use the open systems approach to provide a framework for an overview of the field and analysis of a disparate group of topics.

The readings selected were tested for readability and interest level with graduate and undergraduate students. Those readings included were seen as useful and important contributions to understanding the field. Changes were made in both selections and the introductions to the readings as a result of students' comments. Each chapter begins with an introduction to show the interrelationships between the various issues in education. Each reading is preceded by introductory remarks and questions to guide students to key aspects of the

reading and to tie it to other readings.

New to This Edition

The sixth edition of *Schools and Society* introduces 24 new readings, plus revisions of five readings original to this book. Several of the new readings tap important issues in education today, including school funding, gender issues in schools, parent and neighborhood influences on learning, growing inequality in schools, and charter schools. Chapters were reorganized to better portray the new materials in each section of the book, and some readings from the previous edition were moved to new chapters to reflect the new organizational structure. This reader can be used alone, with a text, or with other readings or monographs. The readings included are appropriate for a variety of courses focusing on the study of education, such as sociology of education, social foundations of education, social contexts of education, and the like. This book may be used in departments of sociology, education, social sciences, or others as appropriate.

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About the Editors

The original editors, Jeanne Ballantine and Joan Spade, have known each other for many years through their involvement in the American Sociological Association (ASA) and Sociology of Education Section activities. This project started when Joan asked if Jeanne planned to update her reader. Thus, a collaboration began with the two meeting in hotel rooms at conferences and visiting each other to develop and conceptualize this anthology. This collaboration continues with the publication of the sixth edition and the addition of a new collaborator, Jenny Stuber, who brings a background of writing and research, especially in higher education and inequality.

Jeanne H. Ballantine

is professor emerita of sociology at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. She received an MA from Columbia University and a PhD from Indiana University, with a specialty in sociology of education. She has been teaching and writing for more than 35 years and has written or coauthored several texts, including *Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis*, *Teaching Sociology of Education*, *Sociological Footprints*, and *Our Social World: Introduction to Sociology*. She has also taught and published in other areas, including gender, global social issues, and teaching of sociology, and has been an active member of sociology of education organizations, including the ASA Section on Sociology of Education, the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and the International Sociological Association (ISA) Research Committee on Sociology of Education. She has won numerous awards, including the ASA Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award.

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is professor emerita of sociology at The College at Brockport, State University of New York, in Brockport, New York. She received her MA from the University of Rochester and her PhD from the University of Buffalo. She has been teaching and writing in the field for more than 30 years, including a semester teaching in Budapest, Hungary, as a Fulbright Scholar; she is coeditor of *implementing Educational Reform: Sociological perspectives on Educational Policy* and coauthor of articles in sociology of education on stratification and grouping practices in education. She publishes in other areas, including gender and family, and is coeditor, with Catherine G. Valentine, of *The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities*. She is a member of the ASA, including the ASA Section on Sociology of Education, the Eastern Sociological Society, and Sociologists for Women in Society.

Jenny M. Stuber

is an associate professor of sociology at the University of North Florida. Her research focuses on social class inequality, especially in terms of how people understand and enact it within social institutions. Her book, *Inside the College Gates: How Class and Culture Matter in Higher Education* (Lexington), explores how the reproduction of class inequalities takes place within higher education's social and extracurricular domains. Currently, she is working on an ethnographic project in Aspen, Colorado, examining how middle-class residents respond to and resist the growing class inequality within their community. In addition to two textbooks—*Exploring Inequality* (Oxford University Press) and *The Sociology of Education*

(Routledge), the latter coauthored with Jeanne Ballantine and Floyd Hammock—her research has also appeared in numerous academic journals. A dedicated instructor, her teaching focuses on social inequality, research methods, and annual study abroad trips to Iceland.

Introduction

Schooling is ubiquitous in the world, making education a major institution in societies. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any developed or developing society without a system of schools, from preschool to graduate level. Sociologists who study education examine schools from a variety of perspectives. The readings in this book introduce the primary sociological perspectives on educational systems and survey major issues in the field. The following illustrates some topics and questions addressed by sociologists of education:

> What theories and research methods do sociologists of education use to obtain information? (Chapters 1 and 2)
> What external social pressures and organizations affect the way we teach our children? (Chapter 3)
> In what ways do the informal relationships and expectations in schools affect what happens in schools, including student learning, the development of identities, and the distribution of power? (Chapter 4)
> What are roles and responsibilities of school administrators, teachers, and students? How do these roles and responsibilities intersect, and how do they sometimes come into conflict? (Chapter 5)
> How is the knowledge that we teach our children constructed and selected for our schools? (Chapter 6)
> How do students' race, social class, and gender affect their school experiences and reflect systems of inequality in society? (Chapters 7 and 8)
> How is higher education organized, and how has that system evolved over time? What is the purpose of higher education, and how are students shaped by the college experience? (Chapter 9)
> How does the educational system in the United States compare with those in other countries? (Chapter 10)
> What factors bring about changes in societies' schools and schooling? What kinds of conflicts exist in trying to affect school reform, and what additional possibilities exist? (Chapter 11)

We address these and many other questions by providing an overview of major theoretical perspectives in Chapter 1 and end by considering change and reform of educational institutions in Chapter 11. Throughout this book, readings look at how schools work, how they affect students and society, and how they might work differently. We look at the current condition of education and consider educational change and policy issues, all of which help us to understand the complex matrix of relationships and activities within schools. We hope this knowledge about educational issues will help you make more effective decisions as students, parents, taxpayers, and perhaps educators. After reading this book, you should have gained some understanding of the fields of sociology and education, what both fields contribute to the study of educational systems, and some specific educational issues of concern to sociologists and education professionals.

What Can Sociologists Tell Us About Education?

Sociological analyses of education give us a deeper understanding of the form and purpose of education in a society and the interactions of people within educational organizations. Sociologists study structures and organizations of social systems, including education, family, religion, economics, politics, and health. These social institutions, including education, constitute the major structural components of any society. Sociologists of education focus on the institution of education and the structure, processes, and interaction patterns within it. They also consider the surrounding context of the educational system, including other institutions that influence the education our children receive. These aspects of education vary greatly across societies. In some societies, children learn their proper roles primarily by observing elders and imitating or modeling adult behavior. In other societies, children attend formal schools from a young age and learn the skills and knowledge needed for survival within the school and societal context.

Education and other institutions are interdependent in a society. Change in one brings change in others. For instance, a family's attitudes toward education will affect the child's school experience, as you will read in this book. Therefore, the sociological analysis of education is different from the approach taken by many people in society because sociologists begin by looking at the larger picture of society and the role that education plays in society rather than on individuals in that system. As a result, studies of change in educational systems are more likely to be based in structural rather than personal factors.

The Educational System

The analysis of educational systems falls into two main areas: process and structure. At whatever level of analysis we study the educational system of a society, processes are at work. These are the action parts of the system, bringing the structure alive. Examples of processes include teaching, learning, communication, and decision making, as well as those formal and informal activities that socialize students into their places in school and later life roles. These are the dynamic parts of the educational system.

However, we cannot ignore the structure of a system, including the hierarchy or roles people play—administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and, of course, students—as well as the organization of learning—classroom and school layout, types of schools, and structure of curriculum. Nor can we ignore the school's environment, which consists of groups, organizations, other institutions, and even the global society outside the school, all of which influence school functioning. For instance, politicians and other powerful people in society may put pressure on schools to select particular books (Chapter 6), communities may provide unequal academic opportunities to different groups of students (Chapter 7), and the federal and state political and economic structures shape policies and resources available to schools (Chapters 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, and 11). In short, no school exists in a vacuum. This open systems perspective is the uniting theme in this book.

The Open Systems Perspective

The open systems perspective looks at the educational system as a whole, integrated, dynamic entity. Unfortunately, most research studies focus on only parts of the whole system, and most theoretical perspectives have biases or limitations by focusing on one part. An open systems perspective is not a panacea for all of the problems we face when trying to get the total picture, but this perspective can help us conceptualize a whole system and understand how the small pieces fit together into a working unity. The open systems perspective provides a useful way of visualizing many elements in the system; it helps to order observations and data and represents a generalized picture of complex interacting elements and sets of relationships. The perspective modeled in Figure I.1 refers to no one particular organization or theoretical perspective but rather to the common characteristics of many educational settings.

Although this figure lists the component parts of a total system, it does not imply that one theory is better than another for explaining situations or events in the system. Neither does it suggest the best methodology to use in studying the system. The figure does allow you to visualize the parts you will read about in this book and help you to see where they fit and what relationship they bear to the system as a whole.

Figure I.1 shows the basic components or processes in any social system. These components are the organization, the environment, input, output, and feedback. In the following sections, we briefly discuss each of these parts as it relates to the educational system.

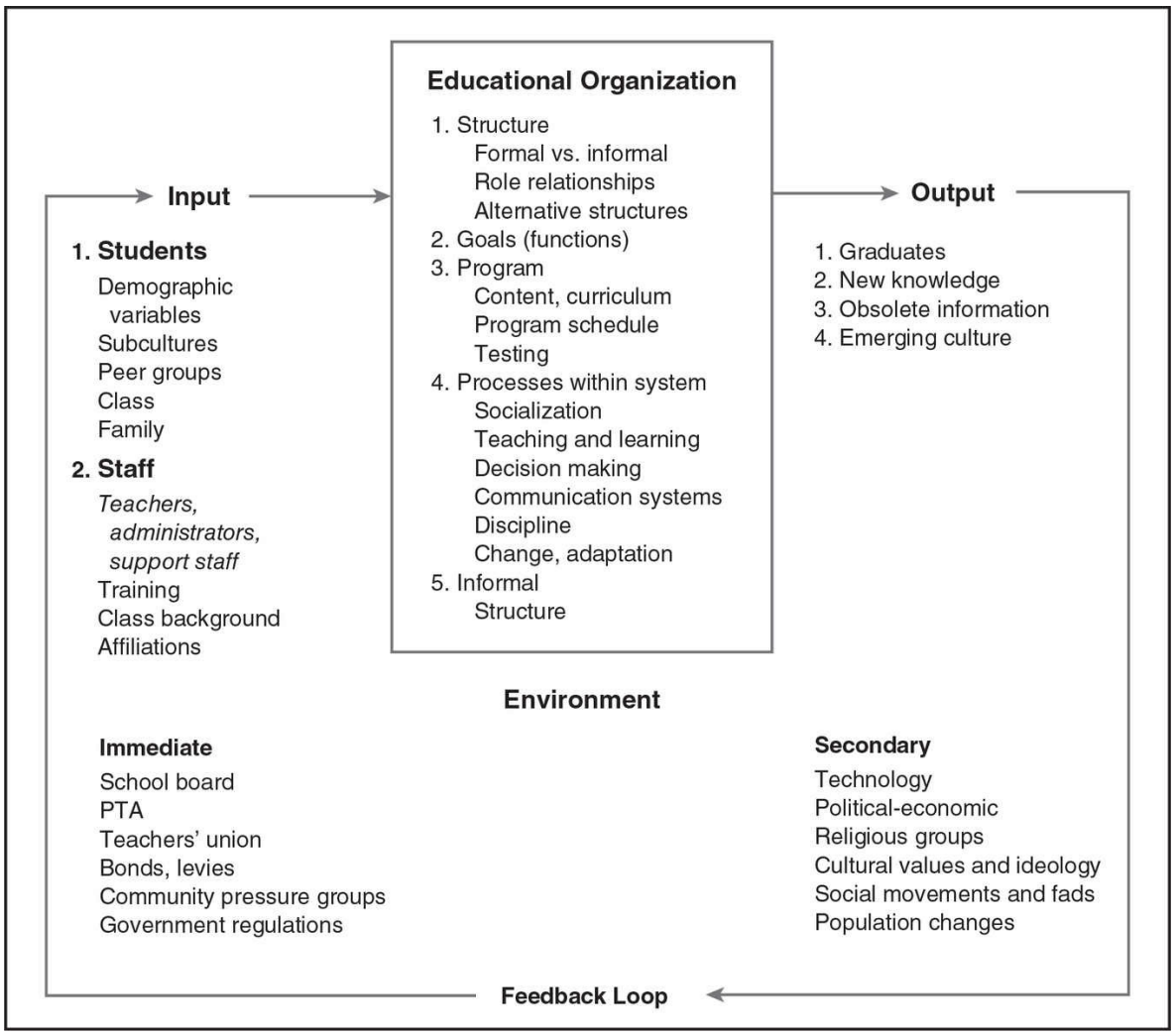
Step 1: Organization

Focus your attention on the center box, the organization. This refers to the center of activity and is generally the central concern for the researcher. This box can represent a society (such as the United States), an institution (such as the public education system), an organization (such as a particular school), a subsystem (such as a classroom), or an interaction (such as between teachers and students or between peers). For purposes of discussion, we shall refer to this as *the organization*. It is in the organization that many activities related to education take place, illustrating that the organization is more than structure, positions, roles, and functions. Within the organizational boundaries is a structure consisting of parts and subparts, positions and roles. Although we speak of the organization as though it were a living entity, we are really referring to the personnel who carry out the activities of the organization and make decisions about organizational action. The patterns of processes in the system bring the organization alive. Decision making and formulation of rules by key personnel, communication between members of the organization, socialization into positions in the organization, teaching in the classroom—these are among the many patterns of activities that are constantly taking place.

These patterns of processes do not take place in a vacuum. The decision makers holding positions and carrying out roles in the organization are constantly responding to demands from both inside and outside the organization. For example, the principal of a school must respond to many different constituencies, including federal, state, and local agencies; district personnel; parents; teachers; students; and even neighbors who live

near the school. The boundaries of the organization are not solid but rather remain flexible and pliable in most systems to allow the system to respond to its environment. We call this *open boundaries*, or an open system.

Figure I.1 Open Systems Approach to Education



Note: From Ballantine, J. H., Hammack, F. M., & Stuber, J. (2017). The sociology of education: A systematic approach (8th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. Copyright 2017 by Taylor & Francis.

Capturing the relationships in the school can tell us as much about its functioning as observing formal roles and structure. For example, students' experiences depend on their social class backgrounds, the responses of school staff to their behavior within schools, and the actions of students and staff that create school cultures.

Step 2: Environment

An open system implies that there is interaction between the patterns within the organizations and the environments outside the organizations. The environment refers to everything that surrounds the organization and influences it in some way. Typically the environment includes other surrounding systems. For schools, an important aspect of the environment is financial—where they get their money. What rules are imposed on schools is another critical factor, as schools exist within a maze of social, political, and legal expectations, such as the recent Race to the Top legislation. Another is the employment market and job skills needed at a particular time. For each school organization, the crucial factors in its environment will differ and change over time. Another important factor in the environment is family and particularly the financial and other support

families provide to schools and their children through their social class background. As described throughout the book—but particularly in Chapters 7 and 8—the social class context surrounding children has a strong influence on their academic achievement.

Organizations depend on their environments to meet many of their resource requirements and to obtain information. Every school and school district faces a different set of challenges from its environment. There are many necessary and desired interactions with the environment, and some that are not so pleasant. The interaction of the school with the environment takes place in our systems model in the form of input and output.

Step 3: Input

The organization receives input from the environment in such forms as information (including textbooks and classroom materials), raw materials, personnel, finances, and new ideas. Furthermore, persons who are members of the organization are also part of surrounding communities and bring into the organization influences from the environment.

Some environmental inputs are mandatory for the organization's survival; others vary in degree of importance. For most organizations, some inputs are undesirable but unavoidable: new legal restrictions, competition, or financial pressures. The organization can exert some control over inputs. For instance, schools have selection processes for new teachers, textbooks, and other curricular materials. Schools have less control over other inputs, such as which students they serve. Certain positions in the organization are held by personnel who act as buffers between the organization and its environment. For example, the secretary who answers the phone has a major controlling function and so too, in a very different manner, does the principal of a school.

Step 4: Output

Output refers to the material items and the nonmaterial ideas that leave the organization, such elements as completed products, wastes, information, evolving culture, and new technology. There may be personnel who bridge the gap between organizations and their environment. Personnel with responsibility for selling the organization's product serve this function, whether they work in a placement office for college graduates or in the central administrative offices of a school district creating newsletters and funding solicitations for local taxpayers and others.

The normal production of new knowledge in colleges and universities in the form of research papers and articles represents output from these educational institutions. As you will read in Chapter 6, despite the view that knowledge is produced within a well-organized structure, the process of producing knowledge is highly political and embedded within social relationships.

Step 5: Feedback

A key aspect of an open systems model is the process of feedback. This process implies that an organization's leaders are constantly learning about and adapting to changes and demands in the environment as a result of

news they receive. For instance, the organizational personnel compare the current state of affairs with desired goals and environmental feedback to determine new courses of action. The feedback may be positive or negative, requiring differing responses. Top administrators of our educational institutions are, in many ways, managers of this system of feedback.

Organization of the Book

The open systems perspective described previously and in Figure I.1 can serve us in many ways. Not only does it provide an organizing framework for this book, but this perspective can also help to promote interdisciplinary study, as illustrated in many readings in this book. As Marvin Olsen (1978) has said,

> It is not a particular kind of social organization. It is an analytical model that can be applied to any instance of the process of social organization, from families to nation… . Nor is [it] a substantive theory—though it is sometimes spoken of as a theory in sociological literature. This model is a highly general, content-free conceptual framework within which any number of different substantive theories of social organization can be constructed. (p. 228)

A discussion of the fields of education and sociology must include numerous related fields: economics and school financing; political science, power, and policy issues; the family and child; church–state relationships; health and medical care for children; humanities and the arts; and the school's role in early childhood training, among others.

We structured this book to embrace the complexity of education, in terms of both what is studied and how it is studied, within the open systems perspective. Each chapter in the book focuses on illuminating aspects of the open systems perspective and contributing to an overview of educational systems. In selecting readings for the book, we sought to blend theory and classical readings with recent studies and current issues to provide background for current arguments, as well as an understanding of new directions in sociology of education. Though we focus primarily on research within sociology of education, we also include relevant readings from other areas. The readings herein represent a broad range of topics in the field; however, an attempt to cover all areas is not possible because the topic of education is multifaceted and very complex. When we leave out topics, we try to address them briefly in the chapter introductions.

For each chapter, we provide an introduction to both the area of education being covered and the research in that area. Each reading also includes an introduction and questions for you to consider as you read. We encourage you to read individual chapters within the whole as exemplified by the open systems perspective presented in this introduction.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of major classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives used to understand educational systems—from functionalism to branches of conflict and interaction theory. These theoretical perspectives provide different explanations for why schools operate the way they do. This chapter provides the frameworks that are used to understand how schools work and to explain why things are as they are in schools.

Chapter 2 illustrates the relationship between theory and methods in sociology of education and provides examples of different methodological approaches. These approaches cover issues from micro-level to macro-level analyses, from interaction between individuals to examinations of global systems.

Readings discuss qualitative and quantitative approaches to understanding educational systems.

Chapter 3 moves to the environment, the larger context within which the educational system operates. The environment can influence the educational system through control of finances, law, public opinion, and attitudes toward schools. The readings focus on neighborhoods, families, and finances as examples of school environmental influences.

Chapter 4 focuses on schools and educational systems as organizations, including the formal and informal aspects of schools. This is Step 1 in the open systems model: what goes on within the educational organization. The readings provide a sample of the rich literature on formal and informal organizations and structures.

Chapter 5 also focuses inside the educational organization but on the roles and responsibilities of administrators, teachers, and students. The readings illustrate several methods of research, including survey research, use of large data sets, and ethnography.

Chapter 6 considers what knowledge is presented in schools and how that knowledge is selected. These readings illustrate how the processes of determining curricula are affected by the cultural and environmental factors external to schools.

Chapter 7 delves into a key process in schools and societies—stratification by race, class, and gender. Readings explore how the stratification process in the larger society shapes the inputs and outputs, as well as educational organizations themselves. This chapter examines inequalities of social stratification in schools and school-related relationships that contribute to the stratification system.

Chapter 8 looks at programs and policies established to bring equality and equity into educational systems. The attempts at equality and equity include laws, changes in school structures, and attempts to override the dynamics of inequality in society. However, as you will read, these efforts toward equality are not always successful. This chapter explores both the development of the reform efforts and the consequences.

Chapter 9 considers the top tier of the educational system—higher education. The readings illustrate how this part of the educational system also includes both formal and informal structures and is reflected in the larger environment. Again, issues of inequality are addressed, both historically and in current contexts, as we consider the role of higher education in the United States and globally.

Chapter 10 illustrates that educational systems around the world are interrelated through the needs of the global community. Aspects of educational systems around the world are becoming increasingly similar. However, features of local and national environments also influence curricula, testing, and preparation of young people for their roles in a complex world.

Chapter 11 considers how educational systems change and may change in the future. It is important to understand how educational systems work. It is also important to understand why alternatives to current educational systems are difficult to design and implement.

As you read about the different parts of educational systems in this book, we hope you develop a deeper understanding of the role of education both in your life and in the society as a whole.

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Olsen, M. E. (1978). The process of social organization: Power in social systems (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Chapter 1 What Is Sociology of Education?: Theoretical Perspectives

A whole new perspective on schools and education lies in the study of sociology of education. How sociologists understand education can contribute to informed decision making and change in educational institutions. Sociologists of education focus on *interactions* between people, *structures* that provide recurring organizations, and *processes* that bring the structures such as schools alive through teaching, learning, and communicating. As one of the major structural parts, or *institutions*, in society, education is a topic of interest to many sociologists. Some work in university departments teaching sociology or education, others work in government agencies, and still others do research and advise school administrators. Whatever their role, sociologists of education provide valuable insights into the interactions, structures, and processes of educational systems. Sociologists of education examine many parts of educational systems, from interactions, classroom dynamics, and peer groups to school organizations and national and international systems of education.

Consider some of the following questions of interest to sociologists of education: What classroom and school settings are best for learning? How do peers affect children's achievement and ambitions? What classroom structures are most effective for children from different backgrounds? How do schools reflect the neighborhoods in which they are located? Does education "reproduce" the social class of students, and what effect does this have on children's futures? What is the relationship between education, religion, and political systems? How does access to technology affect students' learning and preparation for the future? How do nations compare on international educational tests? Is there a global curriculum? These are just a sampling of the many questions that make up the broad mandate for sociology of education, and it is a fascinating one. Sociologists place the study of education in a larger framework of interconnected institutions found in every society, including family, religion, politics, economics, and health, in addition to education. In this chapter, we examine the basic building blocks for a sociological inquiry into education and the theories that are used to frame ways of thinking about education in society (Ballantine, Hammack, and Stuber, 2017).

With a focus on studying people in groups, sociologists study a range of topics about educational systems. Chapters in this book focus on how sociologists study schools; the environment surrounding schools; the organization of schools and education; the roles people play in schools (teachers, students, administrators, and others); what we teach in schools; processes that take place in schools, including those that result in unequal outcomes for students; how different racial/ethnic groups, genders, and social class backgrounds of students can affect educational outcomes; the system of higher education; national and international comparisons of learning and achievement in different regions and countries; and educational reform. No other discipline has the broad approach and understanding provided by sociology of education.

Theories

Sociologists of education start with perspectives or *theories* that provide a framework to search for knowledge about education systems. Theories are attempts to explain and predict patterns and practices between individuals and in social systems—in this case, educational systems. Theories are carefully structured explanations or arguments that are applied to real-life situations. Since theories are not descriptions of what is happening in schools but only carefully thought-out explanations of why things happen, we can apply more than one theory to explain educational phenomena. An understanding of several theoretical approaches gives us different ways of thinking about educational systems. Theories guide research and policy formation in the sociology of education and provide logical explanations for why things happen as they do, helping to explain, predict, and generalize about issues related to schools. It is from the theories and the resulting research that sociologists of education come to understand educational systems. This chapter provides an overview of sociological theories as they are related to sociology of education, followed by classical and contemporary readings on the major theories. These theories also appear in readings throughout the book.

Following the open systems model discussed in the Introduction enables us to visualize the school system and its relationships with other organizations in its social context, or environment. By visualizing the dynamics inside a school, we can use theories to explain various situations within schools, such as the roles individuals play in schools and interactions between administrators, teachers, students, and other staff; equal opportunity within individual school organizations; social class dynamics as played out between peers in schools; formal and informal dynamics within schools; and the organization of school systems.

What You Will Find in Chapter 1

The purpose of the first chapter is to introduce you to the sociology of education through some key perspectives and theories in the field. The first reading discusses the relationship between sociology and education, why it is useful to study the sociology of education, who has a stake in educational systems and why they are likely interested in the field, and questions asked by sociologists of education. The second reading, by the book's editors Jeanne Ballantine and Joan Spade, outlines early theories in sociology of education and how they have influenced contemporary theories and theorists. This provides an introduction to the remaining readings, which include original works in various theories of sociology of education.

Current sociological theories have a long history in sociological thought, flowing from the early works of Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx. The excerpts included in this chapter build upon their early ideas in attempting to understand the social world from the perspective of the "new" discipline of sociology in the early 1800s. Durkheim's study of the impact of the social system on maintaining order in society is considered the basis for functional theory.

The third reading provides a classical excerpt from Émile Durkheim, generally considered to be the first sociologist to write extensively about education. As a French professor of pedagogy at the Sorbonne in Paris, France, he used sociology to study education, a field in which he wrote and lectured for much of his career, until his death in 1917. Durkheim defined the field of sociology of education and contributed to its early content. He was particularly concerned with the functions or purposes of education for society, the relationship between education and social change, the role of education in preparing young people to adhere to societal norms, and the social system that develops in classrooms and schools. In the reading in this chapter, Durkheim discusses the role that schools play in socializing the young. *Moral Education*, the focus of Durkheim's excerpt here, and his other works in sociology of education helped lay the foundation for more recent functional theorists. Functions are at the root of discussions of education; you will see them reflected in readings throughout the book. Sociologists using the functional perspective see the survival of society at stake —if a society fails to train its members in the skills and knowledge necessary for perpetuating that society, order and social control will be compromised. Durkheim and other functionalists were concerned with how educational systems work in conjunction with other parts of society to create a smooth-running social system.

Historically, the second major theoretical perspective to develop was conflict theory. It became a dominant theory in response to functional theory's focus on the need to preserve stability in society, sometimes at a cost to disadvantaged groups in society. Conflict theorists ask how schools contribute to unequal educational outcomes and distribution of people in stratification systems (such as social classes). A major issue for sociologists of education in the conflict tradition is the role education plays in maintaining the prestige, power, and economic and social position of the dominant groups in society. They contend that more powerful members of society maintain the most powerful positions in society, and the less powerful groups (often women, disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups, and lower social classes) are "allocated" to lower ranks.

Karl Marx and Max Weber set the stage for contemporary conflict theories, and the reading in this chapter by

Randall Collins (1971) provides an example of this perspective applied to education. Classical conflict theorists argue that those who dominate capitalist economic systems also control other institutions in society, such as education. Capitalists use these institutions to maintain power and enhance their own profits, although not without resistance by some students and community groups. Collins also provides an overview of another approach to conflict theory, discussing the use of Weber's concept of "status groups." Weber points out the strong relationship between students' social class origins, their preparation in school, and the jobs they move into after school. Weber argued that schools teach and maintain particular "status cultures"—that is, groups in society with similar interests and positions in the status hierarchy. Located in neighborhoods, schools are often rather homogeneous in their student bodies and teach to the local constituency, thus perpetuating status cultures in neighborhoods and communities.

David Swartz describes a fairly recent branch of conflict theory: "social reproduction." It is based on the question of whether schools help reproduce students' social class by treating students differently based on their class background or other distinguishing factors. Reproduction theorists explore such questions as whether "working-class" students are destined to become working-class adults, and the role schools play in the process. The concept of "cultural capital" (and social and economic capital) focuses, in part, on micro-level issues such as individual student's language patterns and background cultural experiences. Swartz gives an overview of this branch of conflict theory.

Functional and conflict theorists have been debating how to explain what happens in schools since Marx, Weber, and Durkheim's times. Each function of education (discussed in the second reading) has generated controversy. For example, functionalists argue that schools prepare young members of society for their adult roles, thus allowing for the smooth functioning of society, whereas conflict theorists counter that the powerful members of society control access to the best educations, thus preparing only their children for the highest positions in society and retaining their positions of power.

The third major theoretical perspective in sociology of education is interaction theory, a micro-level theory that focuses on individual and small-group experiences in the educational system: the processes and interactions that take place in schools. In *interaction* or *interpretive theory*, individuals are active players in shaping their experiences and cultures and not merely shaped by societal forces. By studying the way participants in the process of schooling construct their realities, researchers can better understand the meaning of education for participants. The final reading by Ray Rist (1977) comes from the interaction theory tradition, and it focuses on *labeling theory*.

One important factor in the teaching and learning process is what teachers come to expect from their students. The concept of *self-fulfilling prophecy* applied to the classroom was made famous by Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) book *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. They studied how teachers form judgments about their students and *label* them based on objective but also subjective factors, such as social class, appearance, and language patterns. The reading by Rist argues that utilizing labeling theory, and an outcome of labeling called the *self-fulfilling prophecy*, helps us to understand school processes from the standpoint of both teachers and students.

As you read about the theories presented in this chapter, try to picture the open systems perspective (discussed in the Introduction) with its many parts, activities, participants, structures, contexts or environments, and processes such as conflict. These readings provide an overview and examples of theoretical perspectives that will help you to understand the education system, interrelationships between parts, and many of the readings in the book that use these theories. In the following chapters, other parts of the open systems model are examined. Some readings take an institutional perspective, looking at how social structure affects the institution of education; others take a more micro-level focus on individuals, classrooms, and interactions in schools. All can be placed in the educational context of the open systems model, and all can be better understood with knowledge of the theories that are discussed in this chapter.

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READING 1

Sociology of Education

A Unique Perspective for Understanding Schools

Jeanne H. Ballantine and Floyd M. Hammack

For many readers, sociology of education is a new field of inquiry. It provides new perspectives on education for future teachers and administrators, parents, students, and policy makers. These first two articles lay the groundwork for understanding the importance of the sociological perspective and theories in researching schools and effective teaching and learning strategies. This reading focuses specifically on what sociologists of education study and how such research is useful in understanding schools in our society.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What can sociology contribute to our understanding of education?
2. Who can benefit from studying the sociology of education, and how?
3. What are some topics of importance to sociologists of education?

Education is a lifelong process. It begins the day we are born and ends the day we die. It is found in every society and comes in many forms, ranging from the "school of hard knocks," or learning by experience, to formal institutional learning—from postindustrial to nonindustrial communities, from rural to urban settings, and from youth to older learners. Sociologists of education look into a range of questions such as the following: How can we increase academic achievement? Do schools simply perpetuate the country's stratification system, rich versus poor? What moral or religious impact should schools have on young people? Are children who have access to technology in schools better prepared for the future? While sociologists do not try to answer questions of right and wrong, good and bad, they do consider the state of education and the outcomes of certain policies and practices.

From *Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis*, 8th ed. (pp. 13–17), by J. H. Ballantine, F. H. Hammack, and J. Stuber, New York, NY: Routledge. Copyright 2017 by Taylor & Francis Group. Reprinted with permission.

Sociologists study people who are interacting and in small to large group situations. Within this broad framework are many specialties; these can be divided into studies of institutions in societies (established aspects of society that address common needs of people), studies of processes, and studies of interactions between individuals and groups. The structure of society—meaning the recurring patterns of behavior and ordered interrelationships to achieve the needs of people—is represented by six major institutions that constitute some of the major subject areas in sociology: family, religion, education, politics, economics, and health. Formal, complex organizations, such as schools, are part of the institutional *structures* that carry out the

work of societies.

Processes, the action part of society, bring the structures alive. Through the process of socialization, people learn how to fit into society and what roles are expected of them. The process of *stratification* determines where people fit into the social structure and their resultant lifestyle. *Change* is an ever-present process that constantly forces schools and other organizations to adjust to new demands. *Learning* takes place both formally in school settings and informally by our family, peers, media, and other influences in our lives. Not all children in the world receive a formal school education, but they all experience processes that prepare them for adult roles. The institution of education interacts and is interdependent with each of the other institutions. For instance, the family's involvement in education will affect the child's achievement in school.

Sociology of education as a field is devoted to understanding educational systems; the subject matter ranges from teacher and student interactions to large educational systems of countries. By studying education systematically, sociologists offer insights to help guide policies for schools. Research on educational systems is guided by sociological theories and studied using sociological methods. Although sociology provides a unique and powerful set of tools to objectively explore the educational systems of societies, it may disappoint those who have an axe to grind or whose goal is to proselytize rather than objectively understand or explore. Sometimes simply raising certain questions is ideologically uncomfortable for those who "know the right answer," but where there is a controversy about educational policy, several different views emerge and proponents feel their view is the right answer. The goal of sociology of education is to objectively consider educational practices, sometimes controversial topics, and even unpopular beliefs to gain an understanding of a system that affects us all.

As you read this book, please ask questions. Challenge ideas. Explore findings—but do so with the intent of opening new avenues for thought, discussion, and research. The purpose of this introductory chapter is to acquaint you with the unique perspective of the sociology of education: the questions it addresses, the theoretical approaches it uses, the methods used to study educational systems, and the open systems approach used in this book. We begin our discussion with an overview of sociology of education.

Why Study Sociology of Education?

There are several answers to this question. Someday you may be a professional in the field of education or in a related field; you will be a taxpayer, if you aren't already; or you may be a parent with children in the school system. Right now you are a student involved in higher or continuing education. Why are you taking this class? If you are a sociology major, you are studying education as one of the major institutions of society; if you are an education major, sociology may give you a new or different perspective as you prepare to enter the classroom. You may be at college in pursuit of knowledge; or this course may be required, you may need the credit, perhaps the teacher is supposed to be good, or it simply may fit into your schedule. Let's consider some of these reasons for studying sociology of education.

Teachers and Other Professionals

Between 2014 and 2024, kindergarten, elementary, and secondary school teachers' job growth will be 6 percent (between 1.5 and 1.6 million teachers), about the average growth in the labor market in the United States, due to projected increases in student enrollments and retirements of current teachers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Yet the field is also experiencing a shortage, due to retirements.

An estimated 3.1 million full-time teachers are involved in public school education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Other college graduates teach in their respective academic fields or become involved with policy matters in the schools. Professionals in such fields as social work and business have regular contact with schools when dealing with clients and employees. For both teachers and all of these other professionals, understanding the educational system is important knowledge for effective functioning.

Taxpayers

Taxpayers play a major role in financing schools at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels, and they should have an understanding of how this money is being spent and with what results. Almost 100 percent of the money used to pay for physical plants, materials, salaries, and other essentials in the US public educational system is from taxes. Revenues for schools come from three main sources: local, state, and federal funds from sales, income, and property taxes. In 2016, the total government spending on education was $1 trillion, or 15 percent of the federal budget (US Government Spending, 2016).

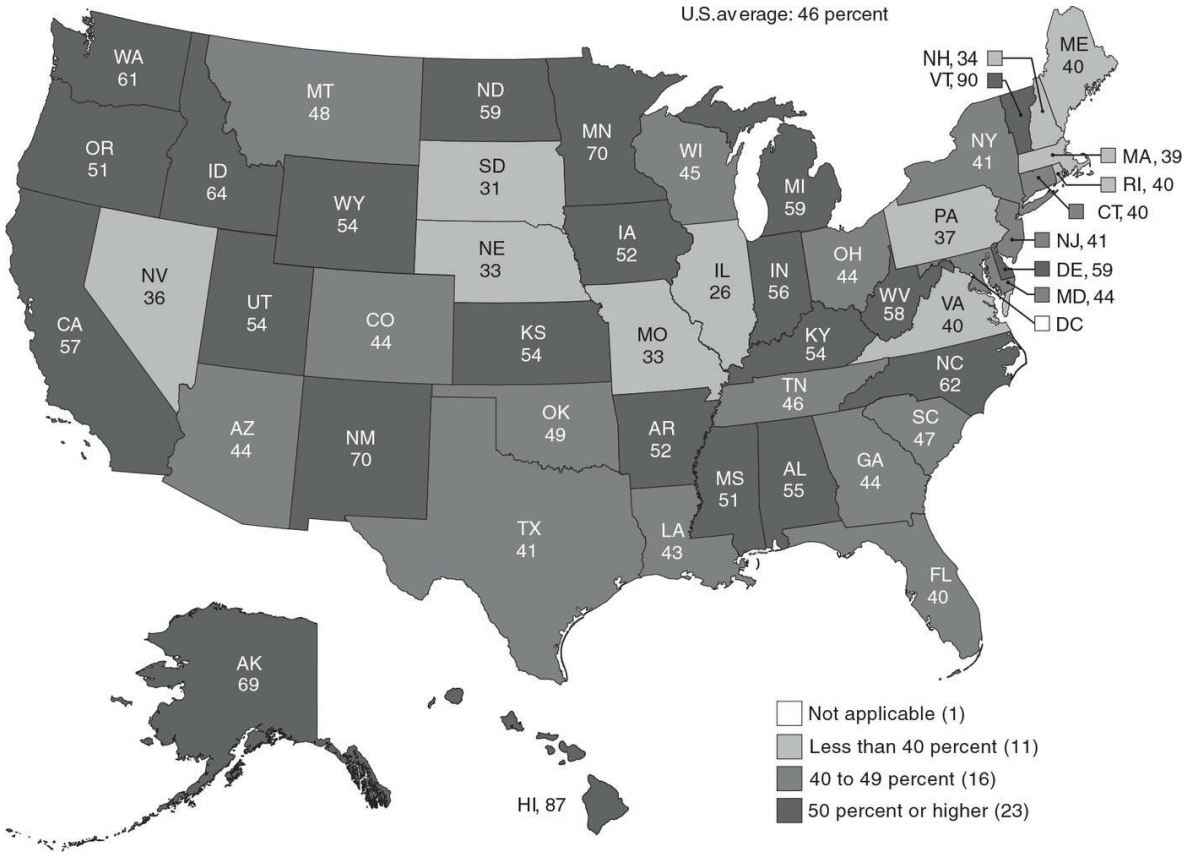
On average, local governments account for 44 percent, states 49 percent, and federal support 13 percent. Average spending per student in the United States is $10,314 (McCann, 2016), with low-income areas receiving significantly less than high-income areas. Sociology of education helps taxpayers understand the school system for which they are paying. Figure 1.1 shows the average percentage of school budgets that comes from state revenues in the United States, primarily from state taxes. In 23 states, over half of educational funding comes from the state; in another 14 states, at least half is from local revenues; and in the remaining states, no single source of revenue—local, state, or federal—reaches 50%.

Parents

A large percentage of adults in the United States are parents, with an average household size of 2.54 members (Statista, 2015). That is a lot of parents who have children in schools—and many want to understand what is happening during the six to seven hours a day their child is away from home. Sociology of education has some answers! According to the "47th Annual PDK/Gallup Polls of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools" (PDK International 2015), adults expect schools to teach basic skills, discipline children, and instill values and a sense of responsibility. The concerns of the American public regarding schools have shown a high level of consistency from year to year (see Table 1.1) (Bushaw and Lopez, 2012). Lack of financial support and lack of discipline topped the list of problems seen by the public in 2012, with overcrowding being third. Fighting and gang violence and drugs were numbers 4 and 5 on the list.

Parents agree with students and educators that there is too much emphasis on standardized testing (64 percent), and 41 percent of respondents say parents should be able to have their children opt out of standardized testing. Ninety-five percent of respondents feel quality of teachers is important to improve public schools, and 84 percent support mandatory vaccinations. These are just a few of the findings from this representative national poll (NEA, 2016), but they illustrate the concerns parents have in their children's schools.

Figure 1.1 State Revenues for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools as a Percentage of Total Public School Revenues, by State: School Year 2013–2014



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "National Public Education Financial Survey," 2013–2014.

Students

Children spend many hours a day in school. They may not question the sociological researchers that try to understand their experiences, but they do think about the good and "bad" teachers, nice classmates and bullies, and easy and hard classes they have. The knowledge that researchers provide can help educators understand what students face and how to make the road smoother and more successful. Grade school education is mandatory in most countries. High school level education is mandatory in developed countries, and available in some developing countries. According to a study by Harvard University and the Asian Development Bank, only 6.7 percent of the world's population has a college degree (The Huffington Post, 2010). Within the United States and other economically advanced countries, many citizens have higher levels of education. In the United States, among adults age 25 and older, 32 percent have attained a bachelor's; 12 percent have attained a master's degree or higher; and 2 percent have completed a PhD (US Census Bureau, 2014).

Table 1.1 What Do You Think Are the Biggest Problems That the Public Schools of Your Community Must Deal With?

	National Totals		*Public School Parents*	
	2008 (%)	2012 (%)	2008 (%)	2012 (%)
Lack of financial support	17	35	19	43
Lack of discipline	10	8	3	3
Overcrowding	6	5	11	6
Fighting/gang violence	6	4	8	5
Drugs	4	2	4	2

College attracts a wide variety of students with numerous incentives and goals for their educational experience. For sociology majors, sociology of education provides a unique look at educational systems and their interdependence with other major institutions in society. For education majors, new insights can be gained by looking into the dynamic interactions both within educational settings and between the institution of education and other institutions in society These insights should give education majors the ability to deal with complex organizational and interpersonal issues that confront teachers and administrators.

Other reasons

Being an informed citizen, understanding how tax dollars are spent, and gaining knowledge for the sake of knowledge—learning what there is to learn—are among the other reasons to study sociology of education.

Questions Asked by Sociologists of Education

As students, parents, and members of a community, we face educational issues constantly. Consider the following examples:

Are Our Children Safe in Schools?

Among the most serious school problems, according to surveys of the American public, are lack of discipline, fighting and gang violence, and drugs in schools (Bushaw and Lopez, 2012). National studies indicate that most students do not experience criminal victimization, and those that do are more likely to experience property crimes. Students in schools with gang members present express more concern about safety. In addition, one-third of students indicate that drugs are available and one-fifth that alcohol is available at their school (Addington et al., 2002). Among US 8th, 10th, and 12th graders, however, recent studies show a decrease in use of alcohol, cigarettes, and illicit or illegal drugs, and no increase in marijuana use. However, there is also a decrease in the perceived harm of marijuana use, and use of e-cigarettes remains high (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2016). Are our students safer in schools than out of school? This question depends on the school and neighborhood, but studies conclude that students in most schools are safe from violence and drug abuse (CDC, 2015).

Should Minimum Competency in Key Subjects Such as Reading and Math Be Required for High School Graduation?

In many countries and in some parts of the United States, students are required to take reading and math exams in order to enter high school and graduate from it. The No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top federal policies in the United States require all students to be tested at various times throughout their school years on Common Core standards. More recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, reaffirms the right of every child to have an equal opportunity for education. With high school graduation rates up, dropout rates down, and more students going to college, this law focuses on preparing all students for college and careers. Increasingly, as states hold schools and teachers responsible for the academic competence of students who move through the system (Borman and Cotner, 2012), this law will set goals for the next phase of educational programming at the national level (US Department of Education, 2015). It also reflects the global concern about the school-to-work pipeline and how to improve its effectiveness. Standardized tests are viewed by many as one way to hold schools accountable for students' progress. Yet, some educators, researchers, and parents question the value of requiring competency tests because they have little benefit for students who pass them and can harm students who do not pass (Warren and Grodsky, 2009). What are some implications of requiring—or not requiring—tests? This question will be discussed in later chapters.

How Should Education Be Funded?

Many countries have centralized governmental educational funding and decision making. Across the United States, however, local taxpayers vote on local school levies that provide over 40 percent of school funding. The

criticism is that local school districts vary dramatically in property or other taxes available to pay their share for schools based on rich versus poor districts. Some schools are forced to curtail programs and cut the number of teachers because there is no money. Local school levies are failing, setting some districts even farther behind. This could be a result of dissatisfied parents, competition for resources, a bid for more community control, or rebellion against higher taxes. The federal government contributes only about 2 percent of its total budget to schools (or $78.9 billion in 2016, and $85 billion proposed for 2017), and that is to support special initiatives (Tucker, 2015). Some aspects of these difficult issues will be addressed in the following chapters.

What Types of Teachers and Classroom Environments Provide the Best Learning Experience for Children?

Educators debate lecture versus experiential learning, and cooperative learning versus individualized instruction. Studies (e.g., Pescosolido and Aminzade, 1999) of effective teaching strategies provide information to help educators carry out their roles effectively. For example, research on the most effective size of classes and schools attempts to provide policymakers with data to inform decision making (Darling-Hammond, 2010). What other classroom factors influence teaching and learning?

Box 1.1 Current Research in the Sociology of Education

The following sampling of current research questions gives an idea of the wide range of subject matter:

- If parents are involved in their children's schooling, are children more successful in school?
- How effective are different teaching techniques, styles of learning, classroom organizations, and school and classroom size in teaching students of various types and abilities?
- What are some community influences on the school, and how do these affect devision making in schools, especially as it relates to the school curriculum and socialization of the young?
- Do teacher proficiency exams increase teaching quality? Do student achievement exams improve education?
- Can minority students learn better or more in an integrated school?
- Do schools perpetuate inequality?
- Should religion be allowed in schools? What are the practices around the world?

A review of the titles of articles in the premiere journal *Sociology of Education* provides an overview of current topics being studied in the field. For example, researchers explored immigrant education, causes of academic failure and dropping out, social class differences in college expectations and acceptance, interracial friendships, racial segregation in schools, educational attainment and attitudes toward schooling, higher education aspirations and enrollments, and females and males in different academic fields. Look through this book and other sociology of education resources to add to the list of questions asked by sociologists of education; they cover a fascinating array of topics. Sociological research sheds light on educational issues, and thus helps teachers, citizens, and policy makers with the decision-making process. Multitudes of questions arise, and many of them are being studied around the world.

From what you have read so far, what topics in sociology of education interest you?

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READING 2

Getting Started

Understanding Education Through Sociological Theory

Jeanne H. Ballantine and Joan Z. Spade

Each of us has opinions about schools. These opinions, particularly if held by people in powerful positions in society, often translate into policy decisions related to schools and votes on tax levies. Theories provide sociologists and policy makers with a choice of frameworks to view educational systems in more depth, rather than simply using opinions, and help us to understand the research that sheds light on what happens in schools, enabling informed decisions about school policies. In this reading, we outline key elements of several major theoretical approaches in sociology of education to provide multiple frames from which to view educational issues discussed in this book.

Questions to consider as you read this article:

1. How can theories in the sociology of education help us understand educational systems?
2. What are some research questions that microlevel and macrolevel theorists might address? How do they differ?
3. Think of a current issue in education that is of interest to you, and consider how the theories discussed in this reading would help you understand that issue.

To understand how education systems work—or don't work—social scientists develop theories providing logical, carefully structured arguments to explain schools and society. Theories together with research provide valuable insights into all parts of education. Those parts are represented by the open systems model discussed in the introduction to this book. Some theories have limited use, but others stand the test of time and have relevance beyond the immediate circumstances that generated them.

Adapted from "Social Science Theories on Teachers, Teaching, and Educational Systems," by J. H. Ballantine and J. Z. Spade, in *The New International Handbook of Teachers and Teaching* (pp. 81–102), edited by A. G. Dworkin and L. J. Saha, New York: Springer. Copyright 2009 by Springer. Adapted with permission.

The purpose of this discussion is to review some of the leading theoretical approaches used in the sociology of education to develop questions about educational systems as a way to help organize discussion. The theories in this reading are divided into micro and macro levels of analysis. Microlevel explanations focus on the individual and interactions between individuals, such as how teachers, administrators, students, parents, or others perceive and respond to educational settings and how their responses shape interactions. For example, we can use microlevel theories to understand how teachers respond differently to some children based on their gender or the social class of their families. Macrolevel explanations, on the other hand, focus on the institution of education in societies and the world, and how schools fit into the larger social structure of societies. As such, macrolevel theorists might study why different educational structures emerge in different societies,

looking at the role of schools in society as a whole. Our discussion of these theories begins with microlevel explanations and moves to macrolevel theoretical perspectives.

For over a half-century, *Why Johnny Can't Read* (Flesch, 1955) and numerous other books explored problems in school systems, from teachers' expectations of students to classroom dynamics and school policies such as tracking and testing. These issues continue to be debated today in both national and international contexts. We use the question of "why Johnny can't read" to illustrate the theories we introduce in this reading.

Microlevel Theories of Education

Efforts to understand why Johnny can't read are typically found at the micro level of analysis. They focus on interactions and experiences in the classroom between the student and others, often attributing failure to the students themselves, to their teachers, or to their home environments. *Interaction theorists* focus on the interpersonal dynamics of the situation and assume that individuals socially construct their lives based on the environments in which they find themselves. With origins in the field of social psychology, symbolic interaction theories link individuals with the symbols they use to understand the situations they are in. These symbols are developed and understood in their immediate social contexts, groups, and society. For example, the names students in each school or classroom call each other or the meanings they give to their schoolwork vary both within and between schools and are often linked to the social class backgrounds of students and their peers.

Nothing is taken for granted in interaction theory; what most people accept as given is questioned and studied. Thus, the question of why Johnny can't read begins with Johnny's "social construction of reality," as well as the socially constructed realities of his teachers, school administrators, parents, and others in his social world and embedded in all interactions Johnny has (Berger & Luckmann, 1963). Add to the puzzle complications of race, class, and gender, socially constructed categories themselves, and we have the context for symbolic interaction theory as illustrated in the reading by Morris in Chapter 7.

Interaction theories also focus on what teachers and students *do* in school. These theories grew from reactions to the macrolevel structural-functional and conflict theories, which focus on society and how schools as institutions fit into the big picture. The criticism is that macrolevel approaches miss the dynamics of everyday school interactions and life in classrooms that shape children's futures. Interaction theorists question things many people overlook, such as how students get labeled and tracked in schools; they ask questions about the most common, ordinary interactions between school participants. Sociologists of education using this approach are likely to focus on students' attitudes, values, and achievements, such as their motivations to do well in school; students' self-concepts; and how interactions between peers, students, teachers, and principals are shaped by the social class backgrounds of all participants.

Among the several approaches taken by interaction theorists are symbolic interaction, role theory, and labeling theory; dramaturgy and ethnomethodology; and phenomenological sociology. The following discussion gives an overview of some of these approaches.

Symbolic Interaction Theory

Symbols are the concepts or ideas that we use to frame our interactions. These concepts can be expressed by words or gestures; they define reality and affect our sense of self and the social hierarchies that surround us. As such, children are viewed as active participants in school and are, therefore, agents in creating the social reality in which they live. For example, popularity is a major issue for many children, especially in middle school years. Popularity is mostly a function of being visible and having everyone know who you are, but it also

specifies a symbolic hierarchy of social power. Sometimes popularity is gained by representing the school in an athletic contest, by being attractive, or by being in a leadership position. The difficulty is that positions of popularity are scarce. Thus, competition is created, and some individuals are going to be "losers," with less social power, while a few others are "winners" in this socially defined popularity contest. Consider also the example of academic grouping. No matter what teachers or administrators call reading groups and different levels of English, mathematics, or science classes, children quickly learn whether they are "good" or "bad" students. Thus, symbols define students' and teachers' interactions—specifying who is "bright," "cooperative," "trouble," and so forth. Symbols define what experiences are "good" or "bad." In other words, symbols create our social reality.

Considerable inequality occurs in the symbols students bring with them to school. Children from families who cannot afford to purchase desired clothing or other status symbols are more likely to be the "losers." Those who "win" are more likely to have access to symbolic resources, including higher class–based language patterns and social experiences. The winners are given special privileges in the classroom or school. These students, who exude privilege in the symbols they bring with them, are more likely to develop leadership skills and generally feel good about themselves.

Symbolic interaction theory has its roots in the works of G. H. Mead and C. H. Cooley on the development of the self through social interaction, whether in school or in other areas of life. People within a culture generally interpret and define social situations in similar ways because they share experiences and expectations (Ballantine, Roberts, and Korgen 2018). Students look to others, particularly their teachers, to understand their place in this culture. Common norms evolve to guide behavior. Students learn through interaction how they are different from others based on individual experiences, social class, and status.

Labeling Theory

Labeling theory is closely related to the symbolic interactionist perspective (Goffman, 1967). If Johnny is told often enough that he is stupid and can't do the work, the label of "stupid" can become a *self-fulfilling prophecy* as he comes to incorporate that label into his sense of self. Then, teachers and others who create and reinforce the label continue to respond to Johnny as if that symbol is an accurate reflection of his abilities. Using labeling theory, we can better understand how teachers' expectations based on students' race, class, ethnic background, gender, religion, or other characteristics affect students' self-perceptions and achievement levels.

Labeling theory helps us to understand how microlevel interactions in the school contribute to individuals' formations of their sense of self. Young people from 6 to 18 years old spend much of their time in school or school-related activities; therefore, *student* is a status that has enormous impact on how they see themselves. Interaction with others in school affects students' sense of self. The image that is reflected back to someone—as student or as teacher, for example—can begin to mold one's sense of competence, intelligence, and likability. The school creates a symbolic structure that influences how individuals make sense of their reality and interact with others. Official school positions such as president of the student council, lower-level reader, or athlete can become important elements of a student's sense of self.

The powerful interactions between labelers and labeled have been studied in schools. A classic study found that students in classrooms where the teachers were told that students in their classes were "late bloomers" and would "blossom" that year achieved much more academically than students in classrooms where the teacher had no expectations for students, even though students in both classrooms were similar in ability and potential (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968).

The process of labeling by assigning students to academic and nonacademic tracks and ability groups serves to reproduce inequalities in society. Low-income students are often placed in low-ability groups, which can become a "life sentence" affecting achievement and future opportunities. Interactions between participants in the school and classroom give insight into the labeling process. For example, in another classic study, Rist (1970, 1977) found that teachers formed expectations for students based on their race, class, ethnicity, and gender and that these expectations had long-term effects on students' achievement and sense of themselves. The result is that low-income students are more likely to be placed in lower-ability groups that do not reflect their actual ability (Rist, 1970, 1977; Sadovnik, 2007).

Outside-of-school statuses can be an important basis for interactions in schools. In addition to social class, gender is reinforced in social interactions in the classroom, as shown in research findings indicating that girls struggle more with self-esteem, especially in middle school, than do boys (AAUW Educational Foundation, 2001). Sadker and Sadker (1994) have found clear and distinct patterns in the way teachers interact with boys and girls in the classroom. Teachers tend to call on boys more, wait longer for boys' responses to questions, and expect boys to act out more in the classroom. Girls, on the other hand, are expected to be quiet and compliant, and teachers tend to do things for girls, rather than push them to succeed. Given how gendered expectations shape interactions in the classroom, it is not surprising that girls tend to struggle with self-esteem issues at adolescence. In Chapter 7, Roslyn Arlin Mickelson discusses gender differences in classrooms for boys and girls and how these differences are changing.

Furthermore, these patterns of gender and class differences vary by race and ethnicity (Carter, 2006; Grant, 2004). The point is that schools are powerful institutions, and the interactions within them heavily influence how children think about themselves and their futures. Students from different social classes, races, genders, and sexual orientations bring different orientations, patterns, and behaviors into the schools, resulting in unique symbolic and interactional experiences (see Rist in this chapter's readings).

Dramaturgy

Erving Goffman looked for connections between the micro levels and macro levels of sociology. Stemming from Durkheim's ideas of the importance of rituals and symbols in everyday life, the messages they transfer, and the collective conscience that develops from them, Goffman wrote that everyday interactions are based on codes or systems that represent rules of the larger society (Antikainen et al., 2010). He compared social life for individuals to front-stage and backstage behavior on which people perform differently depending on the impressions they wish to project to the audience (Goffman, 1959). Goffman's influence is also seen in the study of school interactions with his concepts of "encounters"—conscious and planned interaction (Goffman, 1990). As Johnny comes to school, he goes "on stage" and presents himself through his clothing and other

symbols that he adopts. He attempts to manage the impressions he gives to others, including teachers and peers, in order to manipulate how they define him as he struggles with learning to read.

Rational Choice Theory

While rational choice theory does not ignore symbols and interactions, this theory focuses primarily on the assumption that there are costs and rewards involved in our individual decisions within the classroom and school. According to rational choice theory, if benefits outweigh costs, the individual is likely to act in order to continue receiving benefits. If costs outweigh benefits, the individual will seek other courses of action. In education, the question is how weighing of costs and benefits influences decisions about educational choices by students, teachers, and administrators in the conduct of school experiences.

For example, students who consider dropping out of school likely go through some analysis, comparing benefits of staying in school, such as ability to get a better job, with costs to themselves, for instance their battered self-esteem in schools. For Johnny, deciding whether to do what is necessary to learn to read or to focus on behaviors that gain him esteem in other areas may be part of his school day. Whether we would agree that individuals have assessed the costs and the benefits correctly is not the point; the issue is how individuals evaluate the benefits and costs at a given moment in making what theorists describe as a *rational choice* for them.

Rational choice theory can also be applied to the issue of teacher retention. Of those teachers who made over $40,000 in their first year of teaching 97% returned the next year. Only 87% who earned less than $40,000 returned, illustrating that a rational choice about financial incentives influenced teacher decisions (NCES, 2015). Rational choice theorists would explain this in terms of the perceived costs—relatively low salary for a college graduate; minimal respect from parents, students, and administrators; long days for 9 months of the year; and little opportunity to participate in teaching- and job-related decisions (Dworkin, Saha, & Hill, 2003). Teachers compare these costs to the benefits of teaching—the feeling of making a contribution to society and helping children; time off in the summer; and enjoying aspects of teaching, coaching, or directing. When costs are seen as higher than benefits, teachers leave the profession, resulting in high teacher burnout and dropout rates (Dworkin, 2007). Rational choice theory extends interactionist theories and is useful as we try to understand decision making of individuals in schools.

Macrolevel Theories of Education

Whereas microlevel theories focus on the individual's construction of reality in educational settings and interpersonal interactions between individuals and in small groups within schools, macrolevel explanations focus on larger societal and cultural systems. As such, schools as organizations, the processes of teaching and learning, and the interactions within schools and classrooms are viewed as part of larger social contexts.

Functional Theory

Functional theory helps us to understand how education systems work and what purpose education serves in societies. While this is not a leading theory in sociology of education today, we describe it here because of its historical importance and influence on the field today, and because other theories arose as reactions to or modifications of functional theory. Functional theory starts with the assumption that education as an institution in society operates, along with other institutions, to facilitate the stability of society. There is a relationship between schools and other institutions in society, as all institutions must fulfill necessary societal functions to maintain society. Each part of a society—education, family, political and economic systems, health, religion—works together to create a functioning social system. Each part contributes necessary elements to the functioning and survival of the whole society, just as multiple parts of the body work together to keep us healthy and active. As such, in functional theory schools are analyzed in terms of their functions, or purposes, in the whole system (see the discussion of school functions below). The degree of interdependence among parts in the system relates to the degree of integration among these parts; all parts complement each other, and the assumption is that a smooth-running, stable system is well integrated. Shared values, or consensus, among members are important components of the system, as these help keep it in balance and working smoothly. In terms of why Johnny can't read, it may be that it is not important to society for Johnny to read, or it is simply not functional for all students to know how to read. Consider why this might be so.

Functional theories of education originated in the work of Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), who contributed a method for viewing schools and an explanation of how schools help to maintain order in societies. According to Durkheim, a major role of education in society was to create unity by providing a common moral code necessary for social cohesion in a society. Durkheim's major works in education were published in collections titled *Moral Education* (1925/1961), *The Evolution of Educational Thought* (1938/1977), and *Education and Society* (1903/1956), all written in the early 1900s. In these works, he set forth a definition of education that has guided the field.

In *Moral Education*, Durkheim outlined his beliefs about the function of schools and their relationship to society. Moral values are, for Durkheim, the foundation of the social order, and society is perpetuated through its educational institutions, which help instill values and a sense of moral order in the youngest members of society. In this work, he analyzed classrooms as "small societies," or agents of socialization, reflecting the moral order of the social system at that time. The school serves as an intermediary between the *affective morality* (or a morality related to emotion or feeling) of the family and the rigorous morality of society. Discipline is the morality of the classroom, and without it the classroom can become like an undisciplined

mob, according to Durkheim. Because children learn to be social beings and develop appropriate social values through contact with others, schools are an important training ground for learning social skills and the "rules" of the larger society (instrumental skills), as opposed to the more emotional (affective) character of families. Functionalists also argue that the passing on of knowledge and behaviors is a primary function of schools, one necessary to maintain order and fill needed positions in society. Following Durkheim, sociologists see the transmission of moral and occupational education, discipline, and values as necessary for the survival of society. Thus, schools play a very important role in maintaining functioning of the larger society.

Durkheim was concerned primarily with value transmission for the stability of society. He did not consider the possible conflict between this stable view of the values and skills, and what is necessary for changing emerging industrial societies. He argued also that education should be under the control of the state, free from special interest groups; however, as we know, most governments are subject to influence from interest groups and changes in society, as you will read throughout this book. Talcott Parsons (1959) developed modern functional theory. He saw education as performing certain important tasks or "functions" for society, such as preparing young people for roles in a democratic society. Parsons argued that female elementary school teachers (he assumed all elementary school teachers should be female) play a role in transitioning children from the home and protection of mother to schools where a more impersonal female role socializes children to meet the less personal and more universal demands of society (Parsons, 1959). This linking of teachers to their role in the larger society is only one example of how functionalists have viewed the role of teachers (see the reading by Ingersoll and Merrill in Chapter 5).

Other functionalists argued that some degree of inequality is inevitable in society because the most challenging positions required attracting the most talented individuals who must spend time and money getting the necessary education to fill important roles in society. These theorists saw schools as part of a large system in which individuals who dedicate themselves to training for higher-level occupations would receive greater rewards in terms of income and prestige (Davis & Moore, 1945). This functional theory sees achievement in schools as based on merit, not one's status. Thus, the function of education is to support capitalism through the distribution of labor, allowing those with the most "merit" to achieve and fill higher-level positions in society.

Later functional theorists built on the base provided by Durkheim, Parsons, and others. For example, Dreeben (1968) considered the social organization of schools, while others examined the values taught in school and how these lead to greater societal consensus and preparation for one's role in society (Cookson & Sadovnik, 2002). To summarize, social scientists who research and interpret events from the functional perspective focus on the central functions of education for society as a whole (Ballantine, Hammack, and Stuber, 2017). We briefly summarize those functions as follows:

Socialization: Teaching Children to Be Members of Society

Most people remember their first day of elementary school, marking a transition between the warm, loving, accepting world of the family and a more impersonal school world that emphasizes discipline, knowledge, skills, responsibility, and obedience. In school, children learn that they must prove themselves; they are no

longer accepted regardless of their behaviors as they were in their families. They must meet certain expectations and compete for attention and rewards. They also must prepare to participate in their society's political and economic systems, in which a literate populace is necessary to make informed decisions on issues. Citizens expect schools to respond to the constant changes in societies. In heterogeneous societies with diverse groups and cultures, school socialization helps to integrate immigrants by teaching them the language and customs of the larger society and by working to reduce intergroup tensions. This provides cohesion and order in society as a whole.

Teaching Children to Be Productive Members of Society

Societies use education to pass on values, skills, and knowledge necessary for survival. Sometimes this process occurs in formal classrooms, sometimes in informal places. For example, in West African villages children may have several years of formal education in a village school, but they learn future occupational roles informally by observing their elders in their families and by "playing" at the tasks they will soon undertake for survival. The girls help pound cassava root for the evening meal while boys build model boats and practice negotiating the waves. It is typically only the elite—sons and daughters of the rulers and the wealthy—who receive formal education beyond basic literacy in most traditional societies (Ballantine, Roberts, and Korgen, 2018). However, elders and family members in developed societies cannot teach all the skills necessary for survival. Formal schooling emerged to meet the needs of industrial and postindustrial societies, furnishing the specialized training required by rapidly growing and changing technology. Schools in industrialized societies play a major part in placing students into later work roles.

Selection and Training of Individuals for Positions in Society

Most people have taken standardized tests, received grades at the end of a term or year, and asked teachers to write recommendation letters. Functionalists see these activities as part of the selection process prevalent in competitive societies with formal education systems. Schools distribute credentials—grades, test scores, and degrees—that determine the college or job opportunities available to individuals in society, the fields of study individuals pursue, and ultimately individual status in society. For example, selection criteria determine who gets into the "best" colleges or even into college at all, thereby sealing one's place in society. As you will read later in this book, countries today are using standardized tests in a competition to provide the "best" education in our global society.

Promoting Change and Innovation

Institutions of higher education are expected to generate new knowledge, technology, and ideas, and to produce students with up-to-date skills and information required to lead industry and other key institutions in society. In a global age of computers and other electronic technology, critical thinking and analytical skills are essential as workers face issues that require problem solving rather than rote memorization. Thus, the curriculum must change to meet the needs of the social circumstances. Familiarity with technological equipment—computers, Internet resources, electronic library searches, and so forth—becomes a critical survival skill for individuals and society. Colleges and universities are called on to provide ideas and innovations as well as skilled workers. Consider the example of India, which has top-ranked technical

institutes training their graduates to meet changing world needs. These highly skilled graduates of India's colleges and universities are employed by companies around the world, including those from Europe and the United States, to process information and send it back the next morning. Thus, well-trained, efficient engineers and computer experts working in India for lower wages than in many developed countries have become an essential part of the global economy (Drori, 2006). Many technologically trained graduates from India also come to the United States on special H1B visas, but the current U.S. government is tightening restrictions on these visas (Ainsley, 2017).

Latent Functions of Education

In addition to these intended functions that are filled by schools, education provides unseen latent functions. These are unintended consequences of the educational process. For example, schools keep children off the streets until they can be absorbed into productive roles in society, serving an informal "babysitting" function. In fact, in the United States, children now stay in school well into their 20s, and the age at which they join the labor force or start families is much later than it was in previous generations. Schools also provide young people with a place to congregate, which fosters a youth culture of music, fashion, slang, dances, dating, and sometimes gangs. At the ages when social relationships are being established, especially with the opposite sex, colleges serve as "mating" and "matching" places for young adults. Education also weakens parental control over youth, helps them begin the move toward independence, and provides experiences in large, impersonal secondary groups (Ballantine & Roberts, 2014).

Functional theorists believe that when the above social functions are not adequately addressed, the educational system is ripe for change. The structure and the processes within the educational institution remain stable only if the basic functions of education in society are being met.

Functionalist arguments, therefore, look to how the structure of schooling "works" within the larger societal context. Understanding why Johnny can't read, thus, is not as important as understanding how Johnny's inability to read fits within the larger social order.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theorists challenge the functionalist assumptions that schools are ideologically and politically neutral and that schools operate based on meritocracy where each child is able to achieve to the highest level of his or her own ability so as to better meet the needs of society. Conflict theorists, instead, argue that inequality is based on one's position in the social system, not merit, and that schooling privileges some children and disadvantages others. There are several branches of conflict theory, which include different explanations of the role education systems play in maintaining inequality. Recent theories integrate ethnicity, race, and gender issues and add politics and culture to the traditional Marxist class and economic issues. In addition, issues of "reproduction and resistance" are recent additions to the conflict perspective. Origins of conflict theory are situated in the writings of Marx (1847/1955) and later Max Weber (1948a, 1948b, 1961).

In contrast to functional theory, conflict theory assumes a tension in society created by the competing interests of groups in society. Conflicts occur even when teachers, students, parents, and administrators agree on the

rules. Each group obeys the rules even though the rules are not in their best interests because they may not see alternatives or may fear the consequences of not obeying. However, conflict theorists disagree on whether participants in the education system generally conform to the rules, rebel against them, or feel they have no choices. The roots of conflict thought are outlined below, and contemporary conflict theory, originating in the 1960s and 1970s, is discussed.

Karl Marx (1818–1883) was outraged over the social conditions of the exploited workers in the class system that resulted from early industrialization. He contended that the economic structure of industrialization, or what he called capitalism, created competing groups, the "haves" and the "have-nots," who lived in a constant state of tension (conflict) over resources that one had and the other wanted. The basis of this struggle is that the haves (or the owners of the means by which goods are produced in a society) control economic resources and thus have power, wealth, material goods, privilege (including access to the best schools and education), and influence. The have-nots (or the people who work for those who own the factories that produce goods in society) present a constant challenge as they seek a larger share of economic resources (wages) for their own survival. According to Marx, the haves often use coercive power and manipulation to hold society together. However, power can also be maintained by ideology—controlling ideas, or what people believe to be true. Conflict theorists view change as inevitable, as conflicts of interest should lead to the overthrow of existing power structures. Marx believed that class conflict would continue until the capitalist system of economic dominance was overthrown and replaced by a more equitable system. However, this revolution has yet to happen.

Marx argued that schools create and maintain inequality by teaching students an ideology that serves the interests of the rich and instills in students a sense of "false consciousness." That is, students in schools learn to accept the myth of meritocracy, that all have an equal chance of achieving. Those who buy into this ideology and fail often believe that their failure is due to their own shortcomings and lack of ability. Students learn to internalize their own lower position in society and their lowly fate, thus accepting a false consciousness and legitimizing the wealth and power of capitalists. Marx would also argue that the organization of schooling is set up in such a way that all students will not receive the same quality of education; thus, some students coming out of the educational system will work in factories for less pay.

Weber's Contributions to the Sociology of Education

Max Weber (1864–1920) was said to have argued with Marx's ghost because he believed that conflict in society was not based solely in economic relations as Marx had argued. Weber contended that inequalities and potential conflict were sustained in different distributions of status (prestige), power (ability to control others), and class (economic relations). While Weber also felt that conflict was a constant possibility, he focused more on power relationships between groups and differences in status that create a structure of inequality in societies.

Weber provided a less systematic treatment of education than Durkheim. His work in the field of sociology, however, has contributed to our understanding of many aspects of education. He is noted for his contributions to the understanding of bureaucracy and for the concept of *status groups*. In fact, he writes that the primary

activity of schools is to teach particular "status cultures." Status cultures can be thought of as subcultures based on the social status of the group in society, such as working-class or upper-class culture. Each status group has its own set of symbols (e.g., sneakers that are "cool"), values (how important it is to go to college), and beliefs (whether studying and learning are important) that are known to the individuals in the group, but not fully understood or available to those outside the group. Power relationships and the conflicting interests of individuals and groups in society influence educational systems, for it is the interests and purposes of the dominant groups in society that shape the schools.

Weber (1961) spoke of the "tyranny of educational credentials" as a prerequisite for high-status positions, which thus maintains inequality in the social order of society. This theme is continued by Randall Collins (see his reading in this chapter), another conflict theorist following in Weber's tradition. Collins focuses on the increased requirements for higher-level positions used by more advantaged individuals to further their status (often called credentialism) (Collins, 1979). The rapid expansion of educational qualifications, faster than the number of jobs, has led to "credential inflation," yet these credentials are not necessary for most jobs. The result is that the credentials required for jobs keep increasing, further separating those who can afford the time and money to achieve these credentials and those who cannot.

Within the school there are "insiders" whose status culture, Weber believed, is reinforced through the school experience, and "outsiders" who face barriers to success in school. As we apply these ideas to school systems today to explain the situation of poor and minority students, and why Johnny can't read, the relevance of Weber's brand of conflict theory becomes evident. His theory deals with conflict, domination, and status groups struggling for wealth, power, and status in society. While education is used by individuals and society as a means to attain desired ends, it also creates unequal groups in society. Relating this to Karl Marx's writings on conflict theory, education produces a disciplined labor force for military, political, or other areas of control and exploitation by the elite. Status groups differ in property ownership; cultural status, such as social class or ethnic group membership; and power derived from positions in government or other organizations.

Weber, however, can also be considered a functionalist whose writings, using cross-cultural examples and exploring preindustrial and modern societies, shed light on the role of education in different societies at various time periods (Weber, 1948a). In preindustrial times, education served the primary purpose of training people to fit into a way of life and a particular station in society. With industrialization, however, new pressures faced education from upwardly mobile members of society vying for higher positions in the economic system. Educational institutions became increasingly important in training people for new roles in society (Weber, 1948b).

Conflict Theory Today

Marx and Weber set the stage for the many branches of conflict theory advocated by theorists today. Research from the conflict theorists' perspective tends to focus on those tensions created by power and conflict that ultimately cause change. Some conflict theorists, following from Marx's emphasis on the economic structure of society, see mass public education as a tool of powerful capitalists to control the entrance into higher levels of education through the selection and allocation function. Marx argued that schools contributed to a "false

consciousness," the equivalent of teaching students that the oppressive conditions that shape their lives cannot be changed. They must simply accept their situations, or even believe that they are not as worthy as others who are more powerful or have more advantages. Many conflict theorists believe that until society's economic and political systems are changed, school reform providing equal access to all children will be impossible (Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

Conflict theorists studying education systems point out that differences in the achievement of students are not based primarily on their ability or intelligence; rather, schools reflect the needs of the powerful, dominant groups in society and serve to perpetuate a capitalistic system that reproduces social classes. Teacher expectations based on characteristics of children, such as race and social class background, shape students' learning experiences and affect their achievements. For instance, teacher expectations may differ for poor students who have more limited language skills or speak with a dialect and lack middle-class dress, appearance, and manners. Some also argue that differential funding and resources for schools affect achievements of students. Poor and minority students are also more likely to be placed or tracked into lower reading and academic groups, placements that are hard to change. These groups are given different curricula. The higher-class students receive more mentally challenging curricula that prepare them to think creatively and make decisions, and the lower-class students experience less challenging curricula that prepare them for manual labor. The reading in this chapter on Social Reproduction (Swartz) describes a newer application of conflict theory. They are more likely to lead students to drop out of school. All of the above factors make it harder for Johnny to learn to read and serve to reproduce inequalities in society as a whole.

Other theorists apply conflict theory arguments to the school and classroom level of analysis. For example, Willard Waller believes that schools are in a state of constant potential conflict and disequilibrium; teachers are threatened with the loss of their jobs because of lack of student discipline; academic authority is constantly threatened by students, parents, school boards, and alumni who represent other, often competing, interest groups in the system; and students are forced to go to schools, which they may consider oppressive and demeaning (Waller, 1932/1965). Although larger conflicts between groups in society may be the basis for these within-school patterns, the focus of some conflict theorists is not on these larger societal relationships. Many of these examples reinforce the concept of reproduction, discussed next.

Reproduction and Resistance Theories

In the second half of the 20th century, reproduction and resistance theories further expanded the ideas of conflict theories. The argument of cultural reproduction and resistance theories, very generally, is that those who dominate capitalistic systems mold individuals to suit their own purposes. These theorists examine how forms of culture passed on by families and schools end up shaping individuals' views of their worlds (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). The concept of social reproduction was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Europe to explore the claim that schools actually increase inequality through the process of "teaching." At this time when equality was a central interest, the idea that schools might be contributing to societies' inequalities led to studies of the possibility that schools and families were actually perpetuating social class structures. Following from Marx, schools were viewed as part of a superstructure, along with family, politics, religion, culture, and

economy, organized around the interests of the dominant capitalist group. The dominant group needs workers with good work habits, skills, and loyalty to produce products and services needed by capitalists in exchange for wages for their labor. Schools served the needs of the dominant group by teaching students their roles in society and perpetuating the belief that the system was a fair and merit-based way to select workers. For example, Bowles and Gintis's (1976) correspondence theory takes a macro view of schools, arguing that schools reproduce inequality and create class and power differences in societies. The reproduction process takes place through the student selection and allocation processes (see "Social Reproduction" article in this chapter). These processes create hierarchies within schools and societies, socializing students into these hierarchies of power and domination, and legitimizing the hierarchies by claiming they are based on merit. Following the assumptions of Marx, Bowles and Gintis argue that school structure is based on the needs and standards of the dominant capitalist group in society and thus serves the purposes of that group. Students both bring into and take away different cultural competencies. The bottom line is that schools motivate higher-class students to achieve and decrease ambitions of others, creating a false consciousness (Apple, 1993, 1996).

Resistance theories go beyond social reproduction theories by arguing that teachers and students are not passive participants in the school process and that they do not always follow the expectations that result in social reproduction. For example, students may resist their socialization into certain roles in society (Willis, 1979), just as teachers do not have to accept their role in facilitating reproduction. Teachers may work with all students to give them more equal chances in the system. Teachers can empower students with curricula that are participatory, affective, problem solving, multicultural, democratic, interdisciplinary, and activist (Shor, 1986). Therefore, participants in schools are not necessarily passive actors in the reproduction of inequality.

Contemporary Theories in Sociology of Education

Two concepts related to the development of reproduction and resistance theories are social capital and cultural capital. As you can see from the above, conflict theory started to move from strictly a macro/societal focus to more of a focus on interaction that maintains power and privilege. The concept of *cultural capital* was introduced in the 1970s primarily by Pierre Bourdieu (1973), and *social capital* was introduced by James S. Coleman (1988) in the late 1980s. These two concepts bridged macrolevel and microlevel explanations, attempting to understand how larger societal structures were maintained in day-to-day interactions.

Social capital refers to the social resources students bring to their education and future involvement in school or community. It results in building of networks and relationships students can use as contacts for future opportunities. Ultimately, these networks are connections that make achievement possible and connect individuals to the larger group. Several researchers have applied this concept to the study of students, teachers, and teaching. For instance, connections students make in elite private schools and alumni connections through private schools and colleges enhance future economic status. Coleman's concept of social capital was used to explain the role of schools in reproducing social class.

Bourdieu's *cultural capital* is used in many research studies today. Trained as a sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu (1931–2002) delved into education's influences on stratification and social class, trying to reconcile the influences of social structures on the subjective experiences of individuals. Among the many concepts attributed to Bourdieu and in use today are *cultural and symbolic capital, symbolic violence*, and *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1973). He saw individuals as having different cultural capital based on their social settings. *Social capital* (see above) included the sum of resources held by individuals or groups because of their respective contacts or networks. *Symbolic capital* referred to the prestige, honor, or attention an individual held. These were each sources of individual power. *Cultural capital* refers to cultural practices, including dress and mannerisms, language patterns and expressions, and knowledge of the world derived from life experiences such as visits to museums, all of which provide knowledge of middle-class and upper-class culture; that is, the culture of schools. Cultural capital does not refer to knowing about "culture," commonly thought of in terms of art, music, and theater. Rather cultural capital allows students from middle and upper classes to use patterns of talking, common words, general knowledge, and values from their lives outside of school to fit into the patterns of interaction in school (Lareau, 1989). All individuals have cultural capital, and the form of cultural capital one has is generally related to one's social class background. A child who can speak the teacher's "language" is likely to fare better in school than one who has not been exposed to the cultural capital of the schools. Unfortunately, the cultural capital of children from working-class backgrounds is rarely valued in schools. Dominant groups pass on exposure to the dominant culture that their children take to school. Not only do their children know how schools work, but they also come to school with the knowledge of what to do to be successful there. Working-class children generally do not go to school with this advantage (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

The important point here is that higher social, cultural, and symbolic capital result in more power for the holder. Over time these power relationships come to be seen by individuals as legitimate. Consider how

working-class children in schools might see the educational success of middle-class children as "legitimate" because they work hard or have more natural ability, whereas these advantages are bestowed on middle-class and upper-class children because of their advantaged position in the social structure (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Cultural capital inadvertently is used by schools to reproduce inequality both in the interactions and in the structure of education. For example, different curricula in different tracks create a system of educational inequality for students. While the assignment of students to learning groups is supposed to be based on explicit criteria (merit) such as test scores or completion of previous work, in actuality cultural capital plays a considerable role in who is assigned to groups. As early as preschool, children experience different expectations from teachers (Lubeck, 1985). As noted earlier, Rist (1977) found that children were assigned to groups in kindergarten based on dress and speech patterns. Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade (1987) and Lucas (1999) found that family social class background was a strong predictor of the high school "track" in which students were placed. The end result is that students from working-class backgrounds end up learning more basic skills under strict rules because they are expected to cause problems in the classroom. Those from upper classes learn how to make decisions, be creative and autonomous, and prepare for college (Anyon, 1980; Miller, Kohn, & Schooler, 1985). And, students end up in networks within the learning groups they are placed in, further reinforcing their social and cultural capital advantages or disadvantages. At the college level, students are again tracked into two-year or four-year educations with differences in the curriculum, goals for educational outcomes, and economic results for students (Pincus, 1980, 2002). Therefore, schools end up perpetuating differences in cultural capital by maintaining groups in school that are generally homogeneous in terms of social class backgrounds. And, you thought Johnny couldn't read because he lacked the ability needed to read well!

Teachers also bring varying degrees of cultural capital to schools and classrooms. Some teachers come from working-class and middle-class backgrounds and bring that cultural capital to the education system, both in their own training and in how they teach others. However, in some cases, the students they teach may bring a different cultural capital to the classroom, cultural capital that is either higher or lower in the hierarchy of power and wealth. And, parents with higher cultural capital tend to be more involved in their children's schooling, more able to provide their children with stronger educational experiences, and more at ease with the cultural capital of the school (Lareau, 1989).

The concept of cultural capital has been used in a number of studies of schools and classrooms. Consider McLaren's (1989) study of his experiences as a middle-class white teacher teaching in an inner-city school, facing violence and hostile parents. The cultural capital mismatch he faced was one in which his middle-class cultural capital was ineffective in working with the children he taught. This situation is repeated over and over again because teachers, by the very fact that they have the credentials to teach, have adopted a cultural capital that is not compatible with the children they teach from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Another study of social capital shows how resources in the family, community, and school serve as capital assets for improving student academic performance and psychological well-being (Schneider, 2002). This

study points out that active involvement of parents at home with their children on homework and educational decisions can influence social capital and future opportunities. Portes and Fernández-Kelly (2008) further illustrate the value of cultural capital. They found that children of Mexican immigrants gained cultural capital in different ways, sometimes from people outside their families, to ensure that they went on to succeed in college. This study illustrates that the cultural capital children get from their social class backgrounds does not always have to hold them back. However, only a very few students in Portes and Fernández-Kelly's larger study actually made it to college and successful professional careers.

Code theory was developed around the same time as cultural capital. Code theory is presented in several volumes that lay out the sociolinguistic theory of language codes envisioned by Basil Bernstein (1924–2000). *Codes* refer to organizing principles used by members of a social group. The idea is that the language we use reflects and shapes the assumptions we hold about our relationship to a certain group. Our relationship with that group influences the way we use language.

Bernstein conceptualizes two types of codes—*restricted* and *elaborated*. Restricted codes are those we use with others who share the same knowledge base. It allows us to shortcut language because of assumptions and knowledge we share with those close to us. When we use restricted codes, our language is brief, and we expect the person or persons with whom we are speaking to fill in the rest of our meaning—for example, when we say, "Get that." With elaborated codes, on the other hand, we do not take shortcuts. Everything is spelled out in more detail to be sure the others understand what we are communicating (Bernstein, 1971). This form is used with people we do not know well and in formal speech, such as "Please pick up the hat on the table" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2007). People learn their place in the society by the language codes they use. The codes come to symbolize social identity.

As applied to schools, Bernstein was interested in the poor performance of working-class students, especially in language-based subjects. Though their scores in math-related classes were similar to the scores of middle-class students, lower performance in language signified to him a relation between social class and language. The result is that language codes aid in the social reproduction of class and differences in power, not only in school but also in politics and the workplace. Working-class children are at a disadvantage in schools because they do not share the dominant code of the middle-class and upper-class students. Even the curriculum and transmission of knowledge in schools reflect the dominant code. In trying to understand why Johnny can't read, it may be the codes he brings with him to the classroom.

Although code theory is used less often than cultural capital in understanding processes within schools, it provides an important perspective for us to think about as we study and try to understand inequality in educational achievement.

The last theoretical framework we discuss here is *feminist perspectives on education*. Feminist theorists have echoed the need to "hear" other voices in the education system, in particular women's voices, and to pay more attention to the situation of women. Much of the history of ideas is a history interpreted by men, generally white men in the European tradition. Feminists see the world from a different perspective, one that represents a sometimes forgotten element in past theoretical interpretations of education systems, one in which women

were essentially denied education for most of the history of the United States. They are still denied education in some countries of the world (see Lewis & Lockheed in Chapter 10; Spender, 1987).

While there are many branches of feminist theory, we mention several general feminist ideas that influence the understanding of schools. Early writings on gender and schooling expressed the concern that girl students and female teachers faced certain injustices. Different theorists related inequalities faced by women to differential access, different treatment and exploitation, patriarchy, and male dominance. This led to examination of educational policy and how it affected girls, women, and their future opportunities (Dillabough & Arnot, 2002). Although women have made many gains in educational attainment over the past century, many inequalities remain. As late as 1994, Sadker and Sadker found that girls were treated differently in the classroom—that girls were not called upon as often as boys and essentially not challenged as much as boys in the same classrooms. This discrepancy in classroom treatment likely contributes to lower self-esteem for girls, and it may also explain why men are more likely to enter higher-paying, more prestigious careers because women are less likely to pursue mathematics and science degrees (see the reading by Roslyn Arlin Mickelson in Chapter 7).

Not all feminist scholarship on education focuses on describing gender inequalities. Feminist theory can be used to criticize school practices, such as the assumptions that schools use to connect to parents, but actually meaning mothers, to engage in their children's educational experiences. For example, Stambach and David (2005) argue that school choice programs operate on the gendered assumption about family and employment, implying that mothers should be involved in their children's education and schools. Even today, schools in many European countries send children home for an extended lunch hour during the middle of the day, making it difficult for mothers to work full-time. Much of feminist scholarship focuses on the critical perspective at the macro level with concern about gender issues in educational environments and reproduction of gender inequality in schools. Radical feminists also link their theory to practice, as is the case with critical theorists, resulting in connections between policy and research. Thus, feminist theory and pedagogy rely on "lived experience" and concerted efforts to change the system as it exists to disadvantage women and girls.

Early feminist theories of education were criticized for having a middle-class bias and not adequately recognizing issues of concern for women of color, women from other cultures, nontraditional gender and sexual orientations, different ethnic or global identities, or political persuasions. As a result, various branches of feminist theory of education have arisen (Weiner, 1997) to address gender issues as they intersect with other categories of difference and inequality. It is expected that these multiple feminisms will result in a variety of challenges to educational practices and systems in addressing the teaching and learning experiences of all young women.

These concerns have resulted in feminist theorists struggling to understand the intersection of different categories of difference and inequality. Students are treated not solely based on gender, but also based on race and ethnicity, social class background, and other categories of difference and inequality, such as sexual orientation. These categories intersect to create complex patterns of oppression and suppression not captured by either early feminist theories or other theories discussed in this reading. For example, research by Grant

(2004) finds that teachers use black girls to run errands in the classroom and, with findings similar to Ferguson (2000), that black boys are viewed by teachers as "trouble" long before they do anything wrong. Gender alone does not explain fully the experiences of children across categories of difference and inequality. Therefore, when trying to understand why Johnny can't read, we may want to consider effects of his gender and race.

Conclusion

There is a long and broad tradition of social science and sociological theories, beginning with the coining of the word *sociology* by Auguste Comte in 1838. These theories provide a range of explanations that can be used to examine issues and problems in educational systems in order to better understand the roles and activities in schools and society. All theories evolve. As described, interaction, functional, and conflict theories have gone through stages that attempted to explain the educational systems of the time and to react to previous theories that were inadequate to explain concerns of the education system. Recent trends see schools as "contested terrain" for determining curricula that meet diverse needs.

In short, different theorists help us to think differently as we attempt to explain why schools work as they do. This broad range of theories presents many alternative ways of thinking about schools and is valuable as policy makers and researchers try to find solutions to the multitude of problems plaguing education today, in both developed and developing countries.

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READING 3

Moral Education

Émile Durkheim

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) was an educator and sociologist in France, teaching at the Sorbonne. He wrote extensively on the functions of education in society, including the function of discipline for socializing the child to be a good citizen. In this reading, Durkheim provides insights into the education system, insights that guided later generations of theorists. First, he points to what he considers inevitable inequalities in educational outcomes as children come into the system from different backgrounds and exit with preparation for specialized positions in society. However, all children must learn a common base of knowledge to provide a common foundation that holds people together in society. Durkheim argues that leaders in each society have an idea of what skills and knowledge people need to develop, and education's responsibility is to help the child understand the importance of collective life. Durkheim also discusses the importance of rules, or discipline, in classrooms. If it is lacking, the class is like a "mob" of agitated students. Families are less disciplined by nature, but schools mirror adult society and prepare the young for their parts in society.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What is the role of discipline in schools, according to Durkheim? Does discipline serve the same function today? Explain.
2. How do schools instill discipline? Give an example.
3. What does Durkheim mean when he says we must develop the "habit" of self-control and constraint? Give an example.

There is a whole system of rules in the school that predetermine the child's conduct. He must come to class regularly, he must arrive at a specified time and with an appropriate bearing and attitude. He must not disrupt things in class. He must have learned his lessons, done his homework, and have done so reasonably well, etc. There are, therefore, a host of obligations that the child is required to shoulder. Together they constitute the discipline of the school. It is through the practice of school discipline that we can inculcate the spirit of discipline in the child.

From *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education* (pp. 148–151, 230–236, 277–278), by É. Durkheim, translated by E. K. Wilson and H. Schnurer, New York: Free Press. Copyright 1961, 1973, by The Free Press, a division of Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

Too often, it is true, people conceive of school discipline so as to preclude endowing it with such an important moral function. Some see in it a simple way of guaranteeing superficial peace and order in the class. Under such conditions, one can quite reasonably come to view these imperative requirements as barbarous—as a tyranny of complicated rules. We protest against this kind of regulation, which is apparently imposed on the

child for the sole purpose of easing the teacher's task in inducing uniformity. Does not such a system evoke feelings of hostility in the student toward the teacher, rather than the affectionate confidence that should characterize their relationship?

In reality, however, the nature and function of school discipline is something altogether different. It is not a simple device for securing superficial peace in the classroom—a device allowing the work to roll on tranquilly. It is the morality of the classroom, just as the discipline of the social body is morality properly speaking. Each social group, each type of society, has and could not fail to have its own morality, which expresses its own makeup.

Now, the class is a small society. It is therefore both natural and necessary that it have its own morality corresponding to its size, the character of its elements, and its function. Discipline is this morality. The obligations we shall presently enumerate are the student's duties, just as the civic or professional obligations imposed by state or corporation are the duties of the adult. On the other hand, the schoolroom society is much closer to the society of adults than it is to that of the family. For aside from the fact that it is larger, the individuals—teachers and students—who make it up are not brought together by personal feelings or preferences but for altogether general and abstract reasons, that is to say, because of the social function to be performed by the teacher, and the immature mental condition of the students. For all these reasons, the rule of the classroom cannot bend or give with the same flexibility as that of the family in all kinds and combinations of circumstances. It cannot accommodate itself to given temperaments. There is already something colder and more impersonal about the obligations imposed by the school: They are now concerned with reason and less with feelings; they require more effort and greater application. And although—as we have previously said—we must guard against overdoing it, it is nevertheless indispensable in order that school discipline be everything that it should be and fulfill its function completely. For only on this condition will it be able to serve as intermediary between the affective morality of the family and the more rigorous morality of civil life. It is by respecting the school rules that the child learns to respect rules in general, that he develops the habit of self-control and restraint simply because he should control and restrain himself. It is a first initiation into the austerity of duty. Serious life has now begun.

This, then, is the true function of discipline. It is not a simple procedure aimed at making the child work, stimulating his desire for instruction, or husbanding the energies of the teacher. It is essentially an instrument —difficult to duplicate—of moral education. The teacher to whom it is entrusted cannot guard it too conscientiously. It is not only a matter of his own interest and peace of mind; one can say without exaggeration that the morality of the classroom rests upon his resolution. Indeed, it is certain that an undisciplined class lacks morality. When children no longer feel restrained, they are in a state of ferment that makes them impatient of all curbs, and their behavior shows it—even outside the classroom. One can see analogous situations in the family when domestic education is overly relaxed. In school, this unwholesome ferment of excitement, the result of a failure of discipline, constitutes a more serious moral danger because the agitation is collective. We must never lose sight of the fact that the class is a small society. Thus, no member of this small group acts as though he were alone; each is subject to the influence of the group, and this we must consider most carefully… .

A class without discipline is like a mob. Because a given number of children are brought together in the same class, there is a kind of general stimulation deriving from the common life and imparted to all the individual activities—a stimulation that, when everything goes along normally and is well directed, emerges as more enthusiasm, more concern about doing things well than if each student were working individually. But if the teacher has not developed the necessary authority, then this hyperactivity degenerates into an unwholesome ferment, and a genuine demoralization sets in, the more serious as the class is larger. This demoralization becomes obvious in that those elements of least moral value in the class come to have a preponderant place in the common life; just as in political societies during periods of great flux, one sees hosts of harmful elements come to the surface of public life, while in normal times they would be hidden in the shadows.

It is important, therefore, to react against the discredit into which, for a number of years, discipline has tended to fall. Doubtless when one examines the rules of conduct that the teacher must enforce, in themselves and in detail, one is inclined to judge them as useless vexations; and the benevolent feelings, which childhood quite naturally inspires in us, prompt us to feel that they are excessively demanding. Is it not possible for a child to be good and yet fail to be punctual, to be unprepared at the specified time for his lesson or other responsibilities, etc.? If, however, instead of examining these school rules in detail, we consider them as a whole, as the student's code of duty, the matter takes on a different aspect. Then conscientiousness in fulfilling all these petty obligations appears as a virtue. It is the virtue of childhood, the only one in accord with the kind of life the child leads at that age, and consequently the only one that can be asked of him. This is why one cannot cultivate it too conscientiously… .

General Influence of the School Environment

To understand clearly the important role that the school environment can and should play in moral education, we must first realize what the child faces when he comes to school. Up to that point he has only been acquainted with two kinds of groups. In the family the sentiment of solidarity is derived from blood relationships; and the moral bonds that result from such relationships are further re-enforced by intimate and constant contact of all the associated minds and by a mutual interpenetration of their lives. Then there are little groups of friends and companions—groups that have taken shape outside the family through free selection. Now, political society presents neither of these two characteristics. The bonds uniting the citizens of a given country have nothing to do with relationships or personal inclinations. There is therefore a great distance between the moral state in which the child finds himself as he leaves the family and the one towards which he must strive. This road cannot be travelled in a single stage. Intermediaries are necessary. The school environment is the most desirable. It is a more extensive association than the family or the little societies of friends. It results neither from blood relationships nor from free choice, but from a fortuitous and inevitable meeting among subjects brought together on the basis of similar age and social conditions. In that respect it resembles political society. On the other hand, it is limited enough so that personal relations can crystallize. The horizon is not too vast; the consciousness of the child can easily embrace it. The habit of common life in the class and attachment to the class and even to the school constitute an altogether natural preparation for the more elevated sentiments that we wish to develop in the child. We have here a precious instrument, which is used all too little and which can be of the greatest service.

It is the more natural to use the school to this end since it is precisely groups of young persons, more or less like those constituting the social system of the school, which have enabled the formation of societies larger than the family. With respect to animals, M. Espinas has already demonstrated that groupings of birds and mammals could not have taken shape if, at a certain moment in their lives, the young had not been induced to separate from their parents and formed societies of a new type, which no longer have domestic characteristics. Indeed, wherever the family keeps its members to itself it is easily self-sufficient; each particular family tends to live its own life, an autonomous life—tends to isolate itself from other families so as to provide more easily for itself; under these conditions, it is clearly impossible for another society to be formed. The small group appears only where the new generation, once it has been brought up, is induced to free itself from the family setting to lead a collective life of a new sort. Similarly, if, from the very beginning, inferior human societies are not limited to one household, if they comprise even in their humblest form a number of families, it is largely because the moral education of children is not undertaken by their parents, but by the elders of the clan. The elders would assemble the young, after they had reached a given age, to initiate them collectively into the religious beliefs, rites, traditions—in a word, to everything constituting the intellectual and moral patrimony of the group. Because of this gathering of the young into special groups, determined by age and not by blood, extrafamilial societies have been able to come into being and perpetuate themselves. The school is precisely a group of this kind; it is recruited according to the same principle. The gatherings of young neophytes, directed and taught by the elders, which we can observe in primitive societies, are already actual school societies and may be considered as the first form of the school. In asking the school to prepare children for a higher social

life than that of the family, we are only asking something that is quite in accord with its character.

Furthermore, if there is a country in which the role of the school is particularly important and necessary, it is ours [France]. In this respect, we are living under quite special conditions. Indeed, with the exception of the school, there is no longer in this country any society intermediate between the family and the state—that is to say, a society that is not merely artificial or superficial. All the groups of this kind, which at one time ranged between domestic and political society—provinces, communes, guilds—have been totally abolished or at least survive only in very attenuated form. The province and the guild are only memories; communal life is very impoverished and now holds a very secondary place in our consciousness… .

For morality to have a sound basis, the citizen must have an inclination toward collective life. It is only on this condition that he can become attached, as he should, to collective aims that are moral aims par excellence. This does not happen automatically; above all, this inclination toward collective life can only become strong enough to shape behavior by the most continuous practice. To appreciate social life to the point where one cannot do without it, one must have developed the habit of acting and thinking in common. We must learn to cherish these social bonds that for the unsocial being are heavy chains. We must learn through experience how cold and pale the pleasures of solitary life are in comparison. The development of such a temperament, such a mental outlook, can only be formed through repeated practice, through perpetual conditioning. If, on the contrary, we are invited only infrequently to act like social beings, it is impossible to be very interested in an existence to which we can only adapt ourselves imperfectly… .

If, then, with the exception of the family, there is no collective life in which we participate, if in all the forms of human activity—scientific, artistic, professional, and so on—in other words, in all that constitutes the core of our existence, we are in the habit of acting like lone wolves, our social temperament has only rare opportunities to strengthen and develop itself. Consequently, we are inevitably inclined to a more or less suspicious isolation, at least in regard to everything concerning life outside the family. Indeed, the weakness of the spirit of association is one of the characteristics of our national temperament. We have a marked inclination toward a fierce individualism, which makes the obligations of social life appear intolerable to us and which prevents us from experiencing its joys… .

The school is a real group, of which the child is naturally and necessarily a part. It is a group other than the family. Its principal function is not, as in the case of the family, that of emotional release and the sharing of affections. Every form of intellectual activity finds scope in it, in embryonic form. Consequently, we have through the school the means of training the child in a collective life different from home life. We can give him habits that, once developed, will survive beyond school years and demand the satisfaction that is their due. We have here a unique and irreplaceable opportunity to take hold of the child at a time when the gaps in our social organization have not yet been able to alter his nature profoundly, or to arouse in him feelings that make him partially rebellious to common life. This is virgin territory in which we can sow seeds that, once taken root, will grow by themselves. Of course, I do not mean that education alone can remedy the evil—that institutions are not necessary demanding legislative action. But that action can only be fruitful if it is rooted in a state of opinion, if it is an answer to needs that are really felt. Thus, although we could not at any time do

without the school to instill in the child a social sense, although we have here a natural function from which the school should never withdraw, today, because of the critical situation in which we find ourselves, the services that the school can render are of incomparable importance… .

To bind the child to the social group of which he is a part, it is not enough to make him feel the reality of it. He must be attached to it with his whole being. There is only one effective way of doing this, and that is by making his society an integral part of him, so that he can no more separate himself from it than from himself. Society is not the work of the individuals that compose it at a given stage of history, nor is it a given place. It is a complex of ideas and sentiments, of ways of seeing and of feeling, a certain intellectual and moral framework distinctive of the entire group. Society is above all a consciousness of the whole. It is, therefore, this collective consciousness that we must instill in the child.

Of course, this penetration of the child's consciousness is effected in part by the mere fact of living, by the autonomous play of human relations. These ideas and sentiments are all around the child, and he is immersed in them by living. But there is another operation much too important to leave to chance. It is the business of the school to organize it methodically. An enlightened mind must select from among the welter of confused and often contradictory states of mind that constitute the social consciousness; it must set off what is essential and vital; and play down the trivial and the secondary. The teacher must bring this about and here again history will furnish him the means to this end.

The point is that to imbue children with the collective spirit it is useless to analyze it abstractly. On the contrary, they must be put in direct contact with this collective spirit. Now, what is the history of a people if not the genius of that people developing through time? By making the history of their country come alive for the children, we can at the same time make them live in close intimacy with the collective consciousness. Is it not through intimate and prolonged contact with a man that we finally get to know him? In this respect, a history lesson is the lesson of experience. But since our national character is immanent in historical events, the child would neither see nor feel them if the teacher did not try to set them off in bold relief, especially highlighting those events that merit it. Once again, the point is not to give a course on the French character. All that is needed is a knowledge of what it is and how to disentangle it from the welter of facts.

READING 4

Conflict Theory of Educational Stratification

Randall Collins

Education prepares students for their positions and roles in society. In the excerpt that follows, Randall Collins relates education to occupations by using conflict theory, showing how students receive educations common to their status group. Similar to Max Weber's concept of status groups, these status groups correspond to the idea that schools prepare the young to fit an occupational position commensurate with their status in society. The type of education students receive seals their future status because their education is viewed as appropriate preparation for future jobs.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What is the meaning of *status groups*, and how are they related to the education of children?
2. What role does education play in preparation for membership in a status group?
3. According to Max Weber's conflict theory (see Ballantine and Spade's reading as well as this one), how are education and occupation related?
4. What is the role of conflict theory in Collins's discussion?

Status Groups

The basic units of society are associational groups sharing common cultures (or "subcultures"). The core of such groups is families and friends, but they may be extended to religious, educational, or ethnic communities. In general, they comprise all persons who share a sense of status equality based on participation in a common culture: styles of language, tastes in clothing and decor, manners and other ritual observances, conversational topics and styles, opinions and values, and preferences in sports, arts, and media. Participation in such cultural groups gives individuals their fundamental sense of identity, especially in contrast with members of other associational groups in whose everyday culture they cannot participate comfortably. Subjectively, status groups distinguish themselves from others in terms of categories of moral evaluation such as "honor," "taste," "breeding," "respectability," "propriety," "cultivation," "good fellows," "plain folks," etc. Thus the exclusion of persons who lack the ingroup culture is felt to be normatively legitimated.

From "Conflict Theory of Educational Stratification," by R. Collins, *American Sociological Review, 36*(6), pp. 1002–1019. Copyright 1971 by the American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

There is no a priori determination of the number of status groups in a particular society, nor can the degree to which there is consensus on a rank order among them be stated in advance. These are not matters of definition, but empirical variations, the causes of which are subjects of other developments of the conflict theory of stratification. Status groups should be regarded as ideal types, without implication of necessarily distinct boundaries; the concepts remain useful even in the case where associational groupings and their status cultures are fluid and overlapping, as hypotheses about the conflicts among status groups may remain fruitful even under these circumstances. Status groups may be derived from a number of sources. Weber [1968] outlines three: (a) differences in life style based on economic situation (i.e., class); (b) differences in life situation based on power position; and (c) differences in life situation deriving directly from cultural conditions or institutions, such as geographical origin, ethnicity, religion, education, or intellectual or aesthetic cultures.

Struggle for Advantage

There is a continual struggle in society for various "goods"—wealth, power, or prestige. We need make no assumption that every individual is motivated to maximize his rewards; however, since power and prestige are inherently scarce commodities, and wealth is often contingent upon them, the ambition of even a small proportion of persons for more than equal shares of these goods sets up an implicit counter-struggle on the part of others to avoid subjection and disesteem. Individuals may struggle with each other, but since individual identity is derived primarily from membership in a status group, and because the cohesion of status groups is a key resource in the struggle against others, the primary focus of struggle is between status groups rather than within them.

The struggle for wealth, power, and prestige is carried out primarily through organizations. There have been struggles throughout history among organizations controlled by different status groups, for military conquest, business advantage, or cultural (e.g., religious) hegemony, and intricate sorts of interorganizational alliances are possible. In the more complex societies, struggle between status groups is carried on in large part within organizations, as the status groups controlling an organization coerce, hire, or culturally manipulate others to carry out their wishes (as in, respectively, a conscript army, a business, or a church). Organizational research shows that the success of organizational elites in controlling their subordinates is quite variable. Under particular conditions, lower or middle members have considerable de facto power to avoid compliance, and even to change the course of the organizations (see Etzioni, 1961).

This opposing power from below is strengthened when subordinate members constitute a cohesive status group of their own; it is weakened when subordinates acquiesce in the values of the organization elite. Coincidence of ethnic and class boundaries produces the sharpest cultural distinctions. Thus, Catholics of immigrant origins have been the bulwarks of informal norms restricting work output in American firms run by WASPs, whereas Protestants of native rural backgrounds are the main "rate-busters" (Collins, Dalton, & Roy, 1946). Selection and manipulation of members in terms of status groups is thus a key weapon in intraorganizational struggles. In general, the organization elite selects its new members and key assistants from its own status group and makes an effort to secure lower-level employees who are at least indoctrinated to respect the cultural superiority of their status culture.

Once groups of employees of different status groups are formed at various positions (middle, lower, or laterally differentiated) in the organization, each of these groups may be expected to launch efforts to recruit more members of their own status group. This process is illustrated by conflicts among whites and blacks, Protestants and Catholics and Jews, Yankee, Irish and Italian, etc., found in American occupational life (Dalton, 1951; Hughes, 1949). These conflicts are based on ethnically or religiously founded status cultures; their intensity rises and falls with processes increasing or decreasing the cultural distinctiveness of these groups, and with the succession of advantages and disadvantages set by previous outcomes of these struggles which determine the organizational resources available for further struggle. Parallel processes of cultural conflict may be based on distinctive class as well as ethnic cultures.

Education as Status Culture

The main activity of schools is to teach particular status cultures, both in and outside the classroom. In this light, any failure of schools to impart technical knowledge (although it may also be successful in this) is not important; schools primarily teach vocabulary and inflection, styles of dress, aesthetic tastes, values, and manners. The emphasis on sociability and athletics found in many schools is not extraneous but may be at the core of the status culture propagated by the schools. Where schools have a more academic or vocational emphasis, this emphasis may itself be the content of a particular status culture, providing sets of values, materials for conversation, and shared activities for an associational group making claims to a particular basis for status.

Insofar as a particular status group controls education, it may use it to foster control within work organizations. Educational requirements for employment can serve both to select new members for elite positions who share the elite culture and, at a lower level of education, to hire lower and middle employees who have acquired a general respect for these elite values and styles.

Tests of the Conflict Theory of Educational Stratification

The conflict theory in its general form is supported by evidence (1) that there are distinctions among status group cultures—based on both class and ethnicity—in modern societies (Kahl, 1957, pp. 127–156, 184–220); (2) that status groups tend to occupy different occupational positions within organizations (see data on ascription cited above); and (3) that occupants of different organizational positions struggle over power (Crozier, 1964; Dalton, 1959). The more specific tests called for here, however, are of the adequacy of conflict theory to explain the link between education and occupational stratification. Such tests may focus either on the proposed mechanism of occupational placement, or on the conditions for strong or weak links between education and occupation.

Education as a Mechanism of Occupational Placement

The mechanism proposed is that employers use education to select persons who have been socialized into the dominant status culture: for entrants to their own managerial ranks, into elite culture; for lower-level employees, into an attitude of respect for the dominant culture and the elite which carries it. This requires evidence that: (a) schools provide either training for the elite culture, or respect for it; and (b) employers use education as a means of selection for cultural attributes.

Historical and descriptive studies of schools support the generalization that they are places where particular status cultures are acquired, either from the teachers, from other students, or both. Schools are usually founded by powerful or autonomous status groups, either to provide an exclusive education for their own children, or to propagate respect for their cultural values. Until recently most schools were founded by religions, often in opposition to those founded by rival religions; throughout the 19th century, this rivalry was an important basis for the founding of large numbers of colleges in the United States, and of the Catholic and

Lutheran school systems. The public school system in the United States was founded mainly under the impetus of WASP elites with the purpose of teaching respect for Protestant and middle-class standards of cultural and religious propriety, especially in the face of Catholic, working-class immigration from Europe (Cremin, 1961; Curti, 1935). The content of public school education has consisted especially of middle-class, WASP culture ([Becker, 1961; Hess & Torney, 1967]; Waller, 1932, pp. 15–131).

At the elite level, private secondary schools for children of the WASP upper class were founded from the 1880s, when the mass indoctrination function of the growing public schools made them unsuitable as means of maintaining cohesion of the elite culture itself (Baltzell, 1958, pp. 327–372). These elite schools produce a distinctive personality type, characterized by adherence to a distinctive set of upper-class values and manners (McArthur, 1955). The cultural role of schools has been more closely studied in Britain (Bernstein, 1961; Weinberg, 1967) and in France (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1964), although Riesman and his colleagues (Jencks & Riesman, 1968; Riesman, 1958) have shown some of the cultural differences among prestige levels of colleges and universities in the United States.

Evidence that education has been used as a means of cultural selection may be found in several sources. Hollingshead's (1949, pp. 360–388) study of Elmtown school children, school dropouts, and community attitudes toward them suggests that employers use education as a means of selecting employees with middle-class attributes. A 1945–1946 survey of 240 employers in New Haven and Charlotte, N.C., indicated that they regarded education as a screening device for employees with desirable (middle-class) character and demeanor; white-collar positions particularly emphasized educational selection because these employees were considered most visible to outsiders (Noland & Bakke, 1949, pp. 20–63).

A survey of employers in nationally prominent corporations indicated that they regarded college degrees as important in hiring potential managers, not because they were thought to ensure technical skills, but rather to indicate "motivation" and "social experience" (Gordon & Howell, 1959, p. 121). Business school training is similarly regarded, less as evidence of necessary training (as employers have been widely skeptical of the utility of this curriculum for most positions) than as an indication that the college graduate is committed to business attitudes. Thus, employers are more likely to refuse to hire liberal arts graduates if they come from a college which has a business school than if their college is without a business school (Gordon & Howell, 1959, pp. 84–87; see also Pierson, 1959, pp. 90–99). In the latter case, the students could be said not to have had a choice; but when both business and liberal arts courses are offered and the student chooses liberal arts, employers appear to take this as a rejection of business values.

Finally, a 1967 survey of 309 California organizations (Collins, 1971) found that educational requirements for white-collar workers were highest in organizations which placed the strongest emphasis on normative control over their employees. Normative control emphasis was indicated by (i) relative emphasis on the absence of police record for job applicants, (ii) relative emphasis on a record of job loyalty, and (iii) Etzioni's (1961) classification of organizations into those with high normative control emphasis (financial, professional services, government, and other public service organizations) and those with remunerative control emphasis (manufacturing, construction, and trade). These three indicators are highly interrelated, thus mutually

validating their conceptualization as indicators of normative control emphasis. The relationship between normative control emphasis and educational requirements holds for managerial requirements and white-collar requirements generally, both including and excluding professional and technical positions. Normative control emphasis does not affect blue-collar education requirements… .

Historical Change

The rise in educational requirements for employment throughout the last century may be explained using the conflict theory, and incorporating elements of the technical-functional theory into it at appropriate points. The principal dynamic has centered on changes in the supply of educated persons caused by the expansion of the school system, which was in turn shaped by three conditions:

Education has been associated with high economic and status position from the colonial period on through the twentieth century. The result was a popular demand for education as mobility opportunity. This demand has not been for vocational education at a terminal or commercial level, short of full university certification; the demand has rather focused on education giving entry into the elite status culture, and usually only those technically oriented schools have prospered which have most closely associated themselves with the sequence of education leading to (or from) the classical bachelor's degree (Collins, 1969, pp. 68–70, 86–87, 89, 96–101).

Political decentralization, separation of church and state, and competition among religious denominations have made founding schools and colleges in America relatively easy, and provided initial motivations of competition among communities and religious groups that moved them to do so. As a result, education at all levels expanded faster in America than anywhere else in the world. At the time of the Revolution, there were nine colleges in the colonies; in all of Europe, with a population forty times that of America, there were approximately sixty colleges. By 1880 there were 811 American colleges and universities; by 1966, there were 2,337. The United States not only began with the highest ratio of institutions of higher education to population in the world, but increased this lead steadily, for the number of European universities was not much greater by the twentieth century than in the eighteenth (Ben-David & Zloczower, 1962).

Technical changes also entered into the expansion of American education. As the evidence summarized above indicates: (a) Mass literacy is crucial for beginnings of full-scale industrialization, although demand for literacy could not have been important in the expansion of education beyond elementary levels. More importantly, (b) there is a mild trend toward the reduction in the proportion of unskilled jobs and an increase in the promotion of highly skilled (professional and technical) jobs as industrialism proceeds, accounting for 15% of the shift in educational levels in the twentieth century (Folger & Nam, 1964). (c) Technological change also brings about some upgrading in skill requirements of some continuing job positions, although the available evidence (Berg, 1970, pp. 38–60) refers only to the decade 1950–1960. Nevertheless, as Wilensky (1964) points out, there is no "professionalization of everyone," as most jobs do not require considerable technical knowledge on the order of that required of the engineer or the research scientist.

The existence of a relatively small group of experts in high-status positions, however, can have important effects on the structure of competition for mobility chances. In the United States, where democratic decentralization favors the use of schools (as well as government employment) as a kind of patronage for voter interests, the existence of even a small number of elite jobs fosters a demand for large-scale opportunities to acquire these positions. We thus have a "contest mobility" school system (Turner, 1960); it produced a widely

educated populace because of the many dropouts who never achieve the elite level of schooling at which expert skills and/or high cultural status is acquired. In the process, the status value of American education has become diluted. Standards of respectability are always relative to the existing range of cultural differences. Once higher levels of education become recognized as an objective mark of elite status, and a moderate level of education as a mark of respectable middle-level status, increases in the supply of educated persons at given levels result in yet higher levels becoming recognized as superior, and previously superior levels become only average.

Thus, before the end of the nineteenth century, an elementary school or home education was no longer satisfactory for a middle-class gentleman; by the 1930s, a college degree was displacing the high school degree as the minimal standard of respectability; in the late 1960s, graduate school or specialized professional degrees were becoming necessary for initial entry to many middle-class positions, and high school graduation was becoming a standard for entry to manual laboring positions. Education has thus gradually become part of the status culture of classes far below the level of the original business and professional elites.

The increasing supply of educated persons … has made education a rising requirement of jobs… . Led by the biggest and most prestigious organizations, employers have raised their educational requirements to maintain both the relative prestige of their own managerial ranks and the relative respectability of middle ranks. Education has become a legitimate standard in terms of which employers select employees, and employees compete with each other for promotion opportunities or for raised prestige in their continuing positions. With the attainment of a mass (now approaching universal) higher education system in modern America, the ideal or image of technical skill becomes the legitimating culture in terms of which the struggle for position goes on.

Higher educational requirements, and the higher level of educational credentials offered by individuals competing for positions in organizations, have in turn increased the demand for education by populace. The interaction between formal job requirements and informal status cultures has resulted in a spiral in which educational requirements and educational attainments become ever higher. As the struggle for mass educational opportunities enters new phases in the universities of today and perhaps in the graduate schools of the future, we may expect a further upgrading of educational requirements for employment. The mobilization of demands by minority groups for mobility opportunities through schooling can only contribute an extension of the prevailing pattern.

Conclusion

It has been argued that conflict theory provides an explanation of the principal dynamics of rising educational requirements for employment in America. Changes in the technical requirements of jobs have caused more limited changes in particular jobs. The conditions of the interaction of these two determinants may be more closely studied.

Precise measures of changes in the actual technical skill requirements of jobs are as yet available only in rudimentary form. Few systematic studies show how much of particular job skills may be learned in practice, and how much must be acquired through school background. Close studies of what is actually learned in school, and how long it is retained, are rare. Organizational studies of how employers rate performance and decide upon promotions give a picture of relatively loose controls over the technical quality of employee performance, but this no doubt varies in particular types of jobs.

The most central lines of analysis for assessing the joint effects of status group conflict and technical requirements are those which compare the relative importance of education in different contexts. One such approach may take organization as the unit of analysis, comparing the educational requirements of organizations both to organizational technologies and to the status (including educational) background of organizational elites. Such analysis may also be applied to surveys of individual mobility, comparing the effects of education on mobility in different employment contexts, where the status group (and educational) background of employers varies in its fit with the educational culture of prospective employees. Such analysis of "old school tie" networks may also simultaneously test for the independent effect of the technical requirements of different sorts of jobs on the importance of education. International comparisons provide variations here in the fit between types of education and particular kinds of jobs which may not be available within any particular country.

The full elaboration of such analysis would give a more precise answer to the historical question of assigning weight to various factors in the changing place of education in the stratification of modern societies. At the same time, to state the conditions under which status groups vary in organizational power, including the power to emphasize or limit the importance of technical skills, would be to state the basic elements of a comprehensive explanatory theory of the forms of stratification.

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READING 5

Social Reproduction

David Swartz

Why do students who come into school leave with reinforced social class status? Do schools help reproduce social class? In the 1960s and 1970s, many sociologists of education (several using a Marxist perspective) addressed questions as to why students' school performance paralleled their status in the social class structure and their later work lives. Were schools contributing to reproduction of the class structure, and if so, how was this social reproduction taking place? Early reproduction theorists and researchers considered the social class background of students and their behaviors in and out of school. For example, they studied the relationship between workers and capitalists, the correspondence with the social class into which students were born, and experience in educational systems.

Another branch of reproduction theory, stemming from the theories of Weber and Durkheim, focused on cultural components, or "cultural capital," and how a student's cultural background influences his or her educational attitude and experience. Language, or "linguistic codes," also entered into the discussion, especially as students' language patterns affected their experiences in school. Cognizant that not all students accept their "fate" in schooling lying down, another group of theorists studied student resistance to their social status as defined by their backgrounds and schooling. This article illustrates how the work of earlier theorists has laid the foundation for more recent theorists to both raise questions in the field and build on previous work.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. To what extent do educational institutions influence the social class status of students who attend? How does this occur?
2. What aspects of curriculum and influences of school placement of a student might help reproduce a student's social class?
3. What does "agency" mean? Think of an example from your own school experience.

Social reproduction theory entered the sociology of education in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a critical reaction to liberal educational reform. Though liberal reformers expected public education to promote individual development, social mobility, and greater political and economic equality, social reproduction theorists contend that schools actually enhance social inequalities rather than attenuate them. Drawing particularly on the work of Karl Marx, but also Max Weber and Émile Durkheim, social reproduction theorists focus on how the social class structure is perpetuated from one generation to the next. Why, they ask, do working-class children tend to end up in working-class jobs whereas youth of privileged origins tend to secure positions of prestige and power? Concern with the effects of social background on educational performance and attainment and the contribution of schooling to occupational achievement have of course been long-standing concerns in the sociology of education (Davies, 1995:1449; Dreeben, 1994:29). But social reproduction theorists see in the class–education nexus an indicator of broader institutional arrangements that

reveals a particularly rigid social class structure.

From "Social Reproduction," by David Swartz, in *Education and Society: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 551–557), edited by D. Levinson, P. Cookson, and A. Sadovnik, New York: RoutledgeFalmer. Copyright 2002 by Taylor & Francis Group. Reprinted with permission.

Social reproduction theorists differ, however, in their views on just how the stratification order is constituted and perpetuated. Differences can be observed on the following issues: How tightly coupled are education and the capitalist labor market? How much agency is introduced into a structural analysis? How much micro as well as macro levels of observation and analysis are carried out? How much gender, race, and other status factors as well as social class are considered? How much room is there for innovation or change? Although the antecedents and effects of social reproduction theory are many, this presentation is limited to only the few most influential theorists who have also conducted original research in education.

Bowles and Gintis: The Correspondence Principle

The first social reproduction perspective to have a major impact on education theory and research is the neo-Marxist work of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976). Central to their approach is the "correspondence principle," which builds from Marx's argument that the various parts of capitalist society fit together so that the exploitative social relations between workers and capitalists are reflected throughout society and perpetuated intergenerationally. Education in capitalist society reflects the hierarchical structure of the capitalist firm. The structural similarities between the social relationships that govern personal interaction in the workplace and those in the educational system can be seen in four ways. First, the patterns of power and authority between managers and workers and among administrators, teachers, and students leave little room for workers to control the content of their jobs and for students to control their curriculum. Second, wages, grades, and threat of unemployment and expulsion all impose external rather than internal motivational systems for work and learning. Third, the institutionalized competition and specialization of academic subjects reflect the fragmentation of jobs. And fourth, just as the lowest job levels in the capitalist enterprise emphasize rule following, the middle levels, dependability, and the highest levels of autonomy and self-direction, a similar hierarchy of values can be observed stretching from the lower levels and tracks of the educational ladder up through the middle and highest levels.

Because of this correspondence between schools and the workplace, schools reproduce capitalist society in three ways: they allocate students into different levels in the capitalist work hierarchy so that workers' children become workers and capitalists' children become capitalists; they socialize students to have the skills and attitudes appropriate to those different levels (self-direction for managers, but obedience for workers); and they legitimate these processes of allocation and socialization in terms of individual merit.

This early work represents a kind of neo-Marxian functionalism where the skills, values, and norms transmitted through education correspond directly to the needs for hierarchy in the capitalist firm and in the social class structure. The same tightly coupled education/capitalist labor market nexus can also be found in … Apple's (1979) early work … [that] uses the idea of the "hidden curriculum" to stress how school knowledge subtly transmits capitalist values… .

Pierre Bourdieu: Cultural Capital and Reproduction

Bourdieu (1984, 1988, 1996; Bourdieu and Boltanski 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, 1979) is centrally concerned with how dominant class groups are able to pass their advantages on to their children so that their inheritance of privilege appears legitimate. Although this recalls Marxism, Bourdieu draws more from Weber and Durkheim to stress the cultural components of social stratification. Central to his argument, and his most important contribution to reproduction theory, is his landmark concept of "cultural capital." [For illustrative uses of this concept in education research, see Cookson and Persell (1985), DiMaggio (1982), DiMaggio and Mohr (1985), and Lareau (1989).] Cultural capital covers a wide variety of resources including general cultural awareness, knowledge, skills, and verbal facility that are acquired in childhood socialization and can be passed on from one generation to the next. Social classes differ in the amounts and types of cultural socialization. Dominant class children inherit substantially more cultural capital than do working-class youth. Children who grow up in families that read books, attend concerts, visit museums, and go to the theater and cinema receive a distinct dominant culture of knowledge, style, and language facility.

Schools reward the inherited cultural capital of the dominant classes by implicitly requiring it for good academic performance and systematically devalue the culture of the subordinate classes. Some of Bourdieu's most insightful ethnographic observations about French schooling show how French teachers reward good language style, especially in essay and oral examinations, a practice that tends to favor those students with considerable cultural capital. Dominant class groups are able to capitalize on that advantage by translating their inherited cultural resources into high levels of scholastic performance and attainment. Moreover, schools legitimate this process by explaining academic success in terms of individual motivation and talent. Yet, school success, Bourdieu argues, is best explained by the amount and type of cultural capital inherited from the family milieu. Furthermore, dominant classes are able to reconvert their academic success into a competitive edge in the labor market, thereby reproducing the stratification order… .

Bourdieu (1973) points out that economic capital and cultural capital are not perfectly correlated. The dominant class is internally differentiated into two opposing segments: a dominant segment based on substantial economic capital and a dominated segment based on cultural capital. The dominant segment relies principally on its substantial economic capital to maintain power and privilege, whereas the dominated segment bases its claim to power on the investment and accumulation of cultural capital. Thus, the entire education system is not directly subordinated to the interests of the capitalist class and labor market as Marxists contend. Drawing inspiration from Weber, Bourdieu links higher educational expansion since World War II to conflicts between social classes over the cultural and economic capital and among cultural elites for positions in cultural markets and the state. Indeed, he suggests that the biggest beneficiaries of the expanding educational meritocracy are not the capitalists, as Marxists argue, but those richest in cultural capital, namely, intellectuals, professionals, and government officials… .

Bourdieu further distances himself from neo-Marxist accounts of reproduction by integrating a dynamic of agency into his structural analysis. His concept of "habitus," which is akin to the idea of class subculture, and established initially through childhood socialization, refers to a set of relatively permanent and largely

unconscious dispositions about one's chances of success and how society works that is common to members of a social class or status group. The concept of habitus permits Bourdieu to stress that educational choices are dispositional, tacit, informal decisions rather than conscious, rational calculations. Yet, these dispositions lead individuals to act unwittingly in ways that can reproduce the prevailing structure of life chances and status distinctions. Bourdieu believes there is generally a high correlation between subjective hopes and objective chances. A child's ambitions and expectations with regard to education and career are the structurally determined products of parental and other reference-group educational experience and cultural life. Whether students stay in school or drop out, and the course of study they pursue, Bourdieu argues, depend on their practical expectations of the likelihood that people of their social class will succeed academically. Intergenerational reproduction is most likely to occur at the lower and upper reaches of the class structure where education opportunities, cultural capital, and habitus march. If working-class youth do not aspire to high levels of educational attainment, it is because they have internalized and resigned themselves to the limited opportunities for success in schools that devalue their kind of cultural background. By contrast, dominant class youth internalize their social advantages and the school's validation of dominant class culture as expectations for academic success and stay in school. Bourdieu, thus, insightfully demonstrates how much educational selection in fact occurs through self-selection… .

Overall the social reproduction process seems to occur without great difficulty in Bourdieu's analyses. Schooling seems to ensure the privileged of success and the less fortunate of failure. Risks of downward mobility for upper-class individuals are only mentioned, not explored. And the chances for upward mobility for lower-class youth are suggested to be minimal.

Basil Bernstein: Linguistic Codes and Reproduction

The work of Basil Bernstein (1971, 1973, 1975) in Great Britain provides an influential elaboration of the importance of cultural resources and education in social reproduction by focusing on language patterns. Drawing more from Durkheim than from either Marx or Weber, Bernstein identifies an underlying relationship between the social division of labor, language socialization in families, and the education system. Working-class children grow up in families and communities where limited mobility and education and traditional authority roles at work and at home create familiar, taken-for-granted social relations. These children are socialized into "restricted" linguistic codes in which meanings remain implicit and embedded in their social context. By contrast, middle-class children grow up in families where education, mobility, and changing work and family roles create a cultural and social universe where appropriate roles need to be negotiated and specified. Meanings are less tied to local, taken-for-granted sets of social relations. These children are socialized into "elaborate" linguistic codes that oblige speakers to select from a broader array of syntactic and lexical alternatives to make explicit intended meanings. Because schools operate according to elaborated codes, working-class children find themselves at a distinct disadvantage, whereas middle-class children are linguistically equipped to meet school demands. Even progressive pedagogies that stress role negotiation and discovery put those with restricted codes at a disadvantage. Class relations are this way mediated and reproduced through the way schools deal with restricted and elaborated language patterns.

Reproduction and Resistance

The early stress on social reproduction predictably elicited a critical reaction against the structural determination emphasis by calling for greater attention to actual experience of schooling and to potential forms or protest and agency. By the early 1980s, the reproduction theme fell into disrepute even among some of its original proponents (Apple and Weis, 1983)… . A new orientation emerged to see "reproduction through resistance," where opposition to school by working class youth would be seen as a youthful expression of proletarian culture. The study of reproducing patterns of educational and social inequality becomes mitigated by the search for sources of contradiction, conflict, and resistance.

Foremost among these critics is the British sociologist Paul Willis. Though working within the Marxist tradition, Willis sharply criticizes those versions of social reproduction that stress structural determination, giving little attention to agency. His landmark work, *Learning to Labor* (1977), shifts the research focus from macrostatistical patterns to microethnographic observations. He studies a group of disaffected, white, working-class males in a British secondary school in order to understand how structural forces are mediated through cultural practices.

His study of working-class school boys identifies two distinct informal groups. The majority group, the "ear'oles," conform to school rules and norms and aspire to middle-class occupations much like Bowles and Gintis theorize for working- and middle-class groups. But a small nonconformist "counter–school culture" group of "lads" rejects school authority and ideals and actively seeks out every opportunity to "have a laff" by subverting teacher and administrator authority and mocking the ear'oles. They confront teachers, commit petty delinquency and truancy, smoke, fight, avoid schoolwork, drink, and swagger their sexual exploits.

Willis interprets these familiar expressions of student nonconformity as a form of class politics. On the one hand, their rejection of the school's achievement ideals shows profound insights, or "penetrations," into their limited upward mobility chances under capitalism. Because the lads understand that low-skilled work is unchallenging and only a few can hope to be upwardly mobile, conformism to school standards holds few rewards. Why sacrifice "a laff" for good behavior in school that will lead nowhere. School rebellion, therefore, embodies a submerged critique of capitalism.

On the other hand, this promising insight, which holds potential for generating class solidarity and collective action, is circumscribed by certain "limitations" in the lads' cultural outlook. The lads scoff at the mental labor of schooling, which they associate with the inferior status of femininity, and affirm manual labor, which they equate with masculinity. This anti-intellectual and sexist outlook leads them to understand their entry into the dead-end, low-paying jobs of their fathers and brothers as a free, uncoerced choice rather than a form of class domination. And it cuts them off from the possibility of using critical thought as a tool of social transformation. Thus, the lads' nonconformist resistance to the achievement ideals of schooling ultimately contributes to the reproduction of the class structure by channelling working-class youth into working-class jobs.

McRobbie (1981), Apple and Weis (1985), and Weis (1990) offer a feminized version of the Willis argument by claiming that school opposition by working-class females is less aggressive as their "resistance" finds expression in romantic infatuation and exaggerated femininity. By contesting the model student idea this way, they unwittingly reproduce their class position by becoming housewives and unskilled employees.

These studies illustrate that reproduction occurs through the cultural mediation of agency and that ethnographic observation of the everyday cultural practices of individuals and small groups offers insight into the dynamics of reproduction not captured by macrolevel statistical analysis… .

A landmark and original study by Jay MacLeod, *Ain't No Makin' It* (1995), insightfully synthesizes contributions from all the above theorists, particularly Bourdieu, to inform his ethnographic and participation observation study of two male teenage peer groups. He sees the reproduction process mediated through occupational aspirations that are shaped by a broad range of social and educational factors. His study testifies to the continued relevance of a social reproduction perspective that links ethnographic observation with structural opportunities, that examines youthful protest by situating actor behavior and interpretations within their broader context, and that takes into account other status factors like race.

More recently several of the key resistance theorists (Apple, 1989; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991, 1993; Giroux and McLaren, 1989; Weis, 1990; Wexler, 1987)—including Willis (1990) himself—have assumed a "post-Marxist" position that extends the analysis beyond social class to include gender and race. The early social reproduction focus on class has been eclipsed by attention to the new social movements of feminism, environmentalism, antiracism, and gay liberation. Indeed, critical theory in the sociology of education has shifted from a social reproduction perspective in the early 1970s to resistance theory by the late 1970s and now to post-Marxist analysis (Davies, 1995).

Yet both resistance and post-Marxist theories share with the earlier social reproduction perspective a common lineage: the search for a source of agency that embodies the promise and capacity for generating broad-based social transformation. This has been perhaps the most enduring impact of the social reproduction perspective on critical thinking about education since the 1960s.

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READING 6

On Understanding the Process of Schooling

The Contributions of Labeling Theory

Ray C. Rist

The final reading in this chapter on sociology of education and theory moves to the micro level, dealing with interactions between participants in schools. This is in contrast to the previous discussions of theories that more often dealt with large groups, educational systems, or even societal systems of education. Recall the discussion of interaction theory in the second reading in this chapter by Ballantine and Spade. Ray C. Rist goes into detail to describe labeling theory, one type of interaction theory. He first points out the value of labeling theory for understanding what is happening in schools. In the first part of this reading, Rist explains how teachers label students as bright or slow, and the consequences of these labels for the students in school and in the future. He explains the importance of understanding how and why individuals are labeled —who applied the label to whom—and the results for the labeled person. In applying this to school settings, Rist focuses on teacher expectations of students that are based on the labels given to a student. He also points out the research on the relationship between class, race, ethnicity, and labels. Often teachers expect less of lower-class children than they do of middle-class children. Finally, Rist explains the self-fulfilling prophecy as it applies to schools—the idea that teacher expectations of students influence the actual behavior of the students. Labeling theory and the self-fulfilling prophecy are commonly used theories in sociology of education studies of school interactions.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What is the importance of labeling theory for understanding interaction dynamics in schools?
2. Explain the relationship between labeling theory and self-fulfilling prophecy as they relate to students and classrooms.
3. Of what use do you feel labeling theory might be for understanding the relationship between teachers and students?
4. How does labeling theory overlap with some of the arguments in conflict theories discussed in this reading?

I. Becoming Deviant: The Labeling Perspective

Those who have used labeling theory have been concerned with the study of *why* people are labeled, and *who* it is that labels them as someone who has committed one form or another of deviant behavior. In sharp contrast to the predominant approaches for the study of deviance, there is little concern in labeling theory with the motivational and characterological nature of the person who committed the act.

From "On Understanding the Process of Schooling: Contributions of Labeling Theory," by R. C. Rist, in *Power and Ideology in Education* (pp. 292–305), edited by J. Karabel and A. H. Halsey, New York: Oxford University Press. Copyright 1977 by Oxford University Press. Reprinted with permission.

Deviance is understood, not as a quality of the person or as created by his actions, but instead as created by group definitions and reactions. It is a social judgment imposed by a social audience. As Becker (1963: 9) has argued:

> The central fact of deviance is that it is created by society. I do not mean this in the way it is ordinarily understood, in which the causes of deviance are located in the social situation of the deviant, or the social factors, which prompted his action. I mean, rather, that social groups create deviants by making the rules whose infraction constitute deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, *deviance is not the quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an "offender." The deviant is one to whom the label has been successfully applied. Deviant behavior is behavior that people so label* [emphasis added].

The labeling approach is insistent on the need for a shift in attention from an exclusive concern with the deviant individual to a major concern with the *process* by which the deviant label is applied. Again citing Becker (1964: 2):

> The labeling approach sees deviance always and everywhere as a process and interaction between at least two kinds of people: those who commit (or who are said to have committed) a deviant act, and the rest of the society, perhaps divided into several groups itself… . One consequence is that we become much more interested in the process by which deviants are defined by the rest of the society, than in the nature of the deviant act itself.

The important questions, then, for Becker and others, are not of the genre to include, for example: Why do some individuals come to act out norm-violating behavior? Rather, the questions are of the following sort: Who applied the deviant label to whom? Whose rules shall prevail and be enforced? Under what circumstances is the deviant label successfully and unsuccessfully applied? How does a community decide what forms of conduct should be singled out for this kind of attention? What forms of behavior do persons in the

social system consider deviant; how do they interpret such behavior; and what are the consequences of these interpretations for their reactions to individuals who are seen as manifesting such behavior? (see Akers, 1973).

The labeling perspective rejects any assumption that a clear consensus exists as to what constitutes a norm violation—or for that matter, what constitutes a norm—within a complex and highly heterogeneous society. What comes to be determined as deviance and who comes to be determined as a deviant is the result of a variety of social contingencies influenced by who has the power to enforce such determinations. Deviance is thus problematic and subjectively given. The case for making the societal reaction to rule-breaking a major independent variable in studies of deviant behavior has been succinctly stated by Kitsuse (1964: 101):

> A sociological theory of deviance must focus specifically upon the interactions which not only define behaviors as deviant, but also organize and activate the application of sanctions by individuals, groups, or agencies. For in modern society, the socially significant differentiation of deviants from the nondeviant population is increasingly contingent upon circumstances of situation, place, social and personal biography, and the bureaucratically organized activities of agencies of social control.

Traditional notions of who is a deviant and what are the causes for such deviance are necessarily reworked. By emphasizing the processual nature of deviance, any particular deviant is seen to be a product of being caught, defined, segregated, labeled, and stigmatized. *This is one of the major thrusts of the labeling perspective—that forces of social control often produce the unintended consequence of making some persons defined as deviant even more confirmed as deviant because of the stigmatization of labeling. Thus, social reactions to deviance further deviant careers*. Erikson (1966) has even gone so far as to argue that a society will strive to maintain a certain level of deviance within itself as deviance is functional to clarifying group boundaries, providing scapegoats, clearing out-groups who can be the source of furthering in-group solidarity, and the like.

The idea that social control may have the paradoxical effect of generating more of the very behavior it is designed to eradicate was first elaborated upon by Tannenbaum. He noted (1938: 21):

> The first dramatization of the "evil" which separates the child out of his group … plays a greater role in making the criminal than perhaps any other experience… . He now lives in a different world. He has been tagged… . The person becomes the thing he is described as being.

Likewise, Schur (1965: 4) writes:

> The societal reaction to the deviant then, is vital to an understanding of the deviance itself and a major element in—if not the cause of—the deviant behavior.

The focus on outcomes of social control mechanisms has led labeling theorists to devote considerable attention to the workings of organizations and agencies which function ostensibly to rehabilitate the violator

or in other ways draw him back into conformity. Their critiques of prisons, mental hospitals, training schools, and other people-changing institutions suggest that the results of such institutions are frequently nearly the opposite of what they were theoretically designed to produce. These institutions are seen as mechanisms by which opportunities to withdraw from deviance are sealed off from the deviant, stigmatization occurs, and a new identity as a social "outsider" is generated. There thus emerges on the part of the person so labeled a new view of himself which is one of being irrevocably deviant.

This movement from one who has violated a norm to one who sees himself as a habitual norm violator is what Lemert (1972: 62) terms the transition from a primary to a secondary deviant. A primary deviant is one who holds to socially accepted roles, views himself as a nondeviant, and believes himself to be an insider. A primary deviant does not deny that he has violated some norm, and claims only that it is not characteristic of him as a person. A secondary deviant, on the other hand, is one who has reorganized his social-psychological characteristics around the deviant role. Lemert (1972: 62) writes:

> Secondary deviation refers to a special class of socially defined responses which people make to problems created by the societal reaction to their deviance. These problems … become central facts of existence for those experiencing them… . Actions, which have these roles and self-attitudes as their referents, make up secondary deviance. The secondary deviant … is a person whose life and identity are organized around the facts of deviance.

A person can commit repeated acts of primary deviation and never come to view himself or have others come to view him as a secondary deviant. Secondary deviation arises from the feedback whereby misconduct or deviation initiates social reaction to the behavior which then triggers further misconduct. Lemert (1951: 77) first described this process as follows:

> The sequence of interaction leading to secondary deviation is roughly as follows: (1) primary deviation; (2) societal penalties; (3) further primary deviation; (4) stronger penalties and rejections; (5) further deviations, perhaps with hostilities and resentments beginning to focus upon those doing the penalizing; (6) crisis reached in the tolerance quotient, expressed in formal action by the community stigmatizing of the deviant; (7) strengthening of the deviant conduct as a reaction to the stigmatizing and penalties; and (8) ultimate acceptance of deviant social status and efforts at adjustment on the basis of the associated role.

Thus, when persons engage in deviant behavior they would not otherwise participate in and when they develop social roles they would not have developed save for the application of social control measures, the outcome is the emergence of secondary deviance. The fact of having been apprehended and labeled is the critical element in the subsequent construction of a deviant identity and pursuit of a deviant career.

II. The Origins of Labeling: Teacher Expectations

Labeling theory has significantly enhanced our understanding of the process of becoming deviant by shifting our attention from the deviant to the judges of deviance and the forces that affect their judgment. Such judgments are critical, for a recurrent decision made in all societies, and particularly frequent in advanced industrial societies, is that an individual has or has not mastered some body of information, or perhaps more basically, has or has not the capacity to master that information. These evaluations are made periodically as one moves through the institution of school and the consequences directly affect the opportunities to remain for an additional period. To be able to remain provides an option for mastering yet another body of information, and to be certified as having done so. As Ivan Illich (1971) has noted, it is in industrial societies that being perceived as a legitimate judge of such mastery has become restricted to those who carry the occupational role of "teacher." A major consequence of the professionalization of the role of teacher has been the ability to claim as a near exclusive decision whether mastery of material has occurred. Such exclusionary decision-making enhances those in the role of "teacher" as they alone come to possess the authority to provide certification for credentials (Edgar, 1974).

Labeling theorists report that in making judgments of deviance, persons may employ information drawn from a variety of sources. Further, even persons within the same profession (therapists, for example) may make divergent use of the same material in arriving at an evaluative decision on the behavior of an individual. Among the sources of information available to labelers, two appear primary: first-hand information obtained from face-to-face interaction with the person they may ultimately label, and second-hand information obtained from other than direct interaction.

The corollary here to the activities of teachers should be apparent. Oftentimes, the evaluation by teachers (which may lead to the label of "bright," "slow," etc.) is based on first-hand information gained through face-to-face interaction during the course of the time the teacher and student spent together in the classroom. But a goodly amount of information about the student which informs the teacher's evaluation is second-hand information. For instance, comments from other teachers, test scores, prior report cards, permanent records, meetings with the parents, or evaluations from welfare agencies and psychological clinics are all potential informational sources. In a variation of the division between first-hand and second-hand sources of information, Johnson (1973) has suggested that there are three key determinants of teacher evaluations: student's prior performance, social status characteristics, and present performance. Prior performance would include information from cumulative records (grades, test scores, notes from past teachers or counselors, and outside evaluators) while social status and performance would be inferred and observed in the on-going context of the classroom.

What has been particularly captivating about the work of Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) in this regard is their attempt to provide empirical justification for a truism considered self-evident by many in education: School achievement is not simply a matter of a child's native ability, but involves directly and inextricably the teacher as well. Described succinctly, their research involved a situation where, at the end of a school year, more than 500 students in a single elementary school were administered the "Harvard Test of Inflected Acquisition." In

actuality this test was a standardized, relatively nonverbal test of intelligence, Flanagan's (1960) Test of General Ability (TOGA). The teachers were told that such a test would, with high predictive reliability, sort out those students who gave strong indication of being intellectual "spurters" or "bloomers" during the following academic year. Just before the beginning of school the following fall, the teachers were given lists with the names of between one and nine of their students. They were told that these students scored in the top twenty percent of the school on the test, though, of course, no factual basis for such determinations existed. A twenty percent subsample of the "special" students was selected for intensive analysis. Testing of the students at the end of the school year offered some evidence that these selected children did perform better than the nonselected.

The findings of Deutsch, Fishman, Kogan, North, and Whiteman (1964); Gibson (1965); Goslin and Glass (1967); McPherson (1966); and Pequignot (1966) all demonstrate the influence of standardized tests of intelligence and achievement on teachers' expectations. Goaldman (1971), in a review of the literature on the use of tests as a second-hand source of information for teachers, noted: "Although some of the research has been challenged, there is a basis for the belief that teachers at all levels are prejudiced by information they receive about a student's ability or character." Mehan (1971, 1974) has been concerned with the interaction between children who take tests and the teachers who administer them. He posits that testing is not the objective use of a measurement instrument, but the outcome of a set of interactional activities which are influenced by a variety of contingencies which ultimately manifest themselves in a reified "test score." Mehan suggests (1971):

> Standardized test performances are taken as an unquestioned, non-problematic reflection of the child's underlying ability. The authority of the test to measure the child's real ability is accepted by both teachers and other school officials. Test results are accepted without doubt as the correct and valid document of the child's ability.

Characteristics of children such as sex and race are immediately apparent to teachers. Likewise, indication of status can be quickly inferred from grooming, style of dress, need for free lunches, information on enrollment cards, discussion of family activities by children, and visits to the school by parents. One intriguing study recently reported in this area is that by two sociologists, Clifford and Walster (1973: 249). The substance of their study was described as follows:

> Our experiment was designed to determine what effect a student's physical attractiveness has on a teacher's expectations of the child's intellectual and social behavior. Our hypothesis was that a child's attractiveness strongly influences his teachers' judgments; the more attractive the child, the more biased in his favor we expect the teachers to be. The design required to test this hypothesis is a simple one: Teachers are given a standardized report card and an attached photograph. The report card includes an assessment of the child's academic performance as well as of his general social behavior. The attractiveness of the photos is experimentally varied. On the basis of this information, teachers are asked to state their expectations of the child's educational and social potential.

Based on the responses of 404 fifth-grade teachers within the state of Missouri, Clifford and Walster concluded (1973: 255):

> There is little question but that the physical appearance of a student affected the expectations of the teachers we studied. Regardless of whether the pupil is a boy or girl, the child's physical attractiveness has an equally strong association with his teacher's reactions to him.

The variables of race and ethnicity have been documented, by Brown (1968), Davidson and Lang (1960), Jackson and Cosca (1974), and Rubovits and Maehr (1973), among others, as powerful factors in generating the expectations teachers hold of children. It has also been documented that teachers expect less of lower-class children than they do of middle-class children (cf. Becker, 1952; Deutsch, 1963; Leacock, 1969; Rist, 1970, 1973; Stein, 1971; Warner, Havighurst, & Loeb, 1944; Wilson, 1963). Douglas (1964), in a large-scale study of the tracking system used in British schools, found that children who were clean and neatly dressed in nice clothing and who came from what the teachers perceived as "better" homes, tended to be placed in higher tracks than their measured ability would predict. Further, when placed there they tended to stay and perform acceptably. Mackler (1969) studied schools in Harlem and found that children tended to stay in the tracks in which they were initially placed and that such placement was based on a variety of social considerations independent of measured ability. Doyle, Hancock, and Kifer (1971) and Palardy (1969) have shown teacher expectations for high performance in elementary grades to be stronger for girls than boys.

The on-going academic and interpersonal performance of the children may also serve as a potent source of expectations for teachers. Rowe (1969) found that teachers would wait longer for an answer from a student they believed to be a high achiever than for one from a student they believed to be a low achiever. Brophy and Good (1970) found that teachers were more likely to give perceived high achieving students a second chance to respond to an initial incorrect answer, and further, that high achievers were praised more frequently for success and criticized less for failure.

There is evidence that the expectations teachers hold for their students can be generated as early as the first few days of the school year and then remain stable over the months to follow (Rist, 1970, 1972, 1973; Willis, 1972). For example, I found during my three-year longitudinal and ethnographic study of a single, *de facto* segregated elementary school in the black community of St. Louis, that after only eight days of kindergarten, the teacher made permanent seating arrangements based on what she assumed were variations in academic capability. But no formal evaluation of the children had taken place. Instead, the assignments to the three tables were based on a number of socio-economic criteria as well as on early interaction patterns in the classroom. Thus, the placement of the children came to reflect the social class distinctions in the room—the poor children from public welfare families all sat at one table, the working-class children sat at another and the middle class at the third. I demonstrated how the teacher operationalized her expectations of these different groups of children in terms of her differentials of teaching time, her use of praise and control, and the extent of autonomy within the classroom. By following the same children through first and second grade as well, I was able to show that the initial patterns established by the kindergarten teacher came to be

perpetuated year after year. By second grade, labels given by another teacher clearly reflected the reality each of the three groups experienced in the school. The top group was called the "Tigers," the middle group the "Cardinals," and the lowest group, the "Clowns." What had begun as a subjective evaluation and labeling by the teacher took on objective dimensions as the school proceeded to process the children on the basis of the distinctions made when they first began.

Taken together, these studies strongly imply that the notion of "teacher expectations" is multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. It appears that when teachers generate expectations about their students, they do so not only for reasons of academic or cognitive performance, but for their classroom interactional patterns as well. Furthermore, not only ascribed characteristics such as race, sex, class, or ethnicity are highly salient, interpersonal traits are also. Thus, the interrelatedness of the various attributes which ultimately blend together to generate the evaluation a teacher makes as to what can be expected from a particular student suggests the strength and tenacity of such subsequent labels as "bright" or "slow" or "trouble-maker" or "teacher's little helper." It is to the outcomes of the student's having one or another of these labels that we now turn.

III. An Outcome of Labeling: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

W. I. Thomas, many years ago, set forth what has become a basic dictum of the social sciences when he observed, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." This is at the core of the self-fulfilling prophecy. An expectation which defines a situation comes to influence the actual behavior within the situation so as to produce what was initially assumed to be there. Merton (1968: 477) has elaborated on this concept and noted: "The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a *false* definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come true" (emphasis in the original).

Here it is important to recall a basic tenet of labeling theory—that an individual does not become deviant simply by the commission of some act. As Becker (1963) stressed, deviance is not inherent in behavior *per se*, but in the application by others of rules and sanctions against one perceived as being an "offender." Thus, the only time one can accurately be termed a "deviant" is after the successful application of a label by a social audience. Thus, though many persons may commit norm violations, only select ones are subsequently labeled. The contingencies of race, class, sex, visibility of behavior, age, occupation, and who one's friends are all influence the outcome as to whether one is or is not labeled… . Rosenthal and Jacobson's *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968) created wide interest in the notion of the self-fulfilling prophecy as a concept to explain differential performance by children in classrooms. Their findings suggested that the expectations teachers created about the children randomly selected as "intellectual bloomers" somehow caused the teachers to treat them differently, with the result that the children really did perform better by the end of the year. Though the critics of this particular research (Snow, 1969; Taylor, 1970; Thorndike, 1968, 1969) and those who have been unsuccessful in replicating the findings (Claiborn, 1969) have leveled strong challenges to Rosenthal and Jacobson, the disagreements are typically related to methodology, procedure, and analysis rather than to the proposition that relations exist between expectations and behavior. In the context of a single student facing the authority and vested interests of a school administration and staff, the most likely outcome is that over time, the student will increasingly move towards conformity with the label the institution seeks to establish. Good and Brophy (1973: 75) have elaborated upon this process within the classroom as follows:

1. The teacher expects specific behavior and achievement from particular students.
2. Because of these different expectations, the teacher behaves differently toward the different students.
3. This teacher treatment tells each student what behavior and achievement the teacher expects from him and affects his self-concept, achievement motivation, and level of aspiration.
4. If this teacher treatment is consistent over time, and if the student does not actively resist or change it in some way, it will tend to shape his achievement and behavior. High-expectation students will be led to achieve at high levels, while the achievement of low-expectation students will decline.
5. With time, the student's achievement and behavior will conform more and more closely to that originally expected of him.

The fourth point in this sequence makes the crucial observation that teacher expectations are not automatically self-fulfilling. For the expectations of the teacher to become realized, both the teacher and the student must move toward a pattern of interaction where expectations are clearly communicated and the

behavioral response is consonant with the expected patterns. The vulnerability of children to the dictates of adults in positions of power over them leaves the negotiations as to what evaluative definition will be tagged on the children more often than not in the hands of the powerful. As Max Weber himself stated, to have power is to be able to achieve one's ends, even in the face of resistance from others. When that resistance is manifested in school by children and is defined by teachers and administrators as truancy, recalcitrance, unruliness, and hostility, or conversely denied as a lack of motivation, intellectual apathy, sullenness, passivity, or withdrawal, the process is ready to be repeated and the options to escape further teacher definitions are increasingly removed.

Postscript: Beyond the Logjam

This paper has argued that a fruitful convergence can be effected between the research being conducted on the self-fulfilling prophecy as a consequence of teacher expectations and the conceptual framework of labeling theory. The analysis of the outcomes of teacher expectations produces results highly similar to those found in the study of social deviance. Labels are applied to individuals which fundamentally shift their definitions of self and which further reinforce the behavior which had initially prompted the social reaction. The impact of the self-fulfilling prophecy in educational research is comparable to that found in the analysis of mental health clinics, asylums, prisons, juvenile homes, and other people-changing organizations. What the labeling perspective can provide to the study of educational outcomes as a result of the operationalization of teacher expectations is a model for the study of the *processes* by which the outcomes are produced. The detailing over time of the interactional patterns which lead to changes in self-definition and behavior within classrooms is sadly lacking in almost all of the expectation research to date… .

To extend the research on the educational experiences of those students who are differentially labeled by teachers, what is needed is a theoretical framework which can clearly isolate the influences and effects of certain kinds of teacher reactions on certain types of students, producing certain typical outcomes. The labeling perspective appears particularly well-suited for this expansion of both research and theoretical development on teacher expectations by offering the basis for analysis at either a specific or a more general level. With the former, for example, there are areas of investigation related to (1) types of students perceived by teachers as prone to success or failure; (2) the kinds of reactions, based on their expectations, teachers have to different students; and (3) the effects of specific teacher reactions on specific student outcomes. At a more general level, fruitful lines of inquiry might include (1) the outcomes in the post-school world of having received a negative vs. a positive label within the school; (2) the influences of factors such as social class and race on the categories of expectations teachers hold; (3) how and why labels do emerge in schools as well as the phenomenological and structural meanings that are attached to them; and (4) whether there are means by which to modify or minimize the effects of school labeling processes on students.

Labeling theory provides a conceptual framework by which to understand the processes of transforming attitudes into behavior and the outcomes of having done so. To be able to detail the dynamics and influences within schools by which some children come to see themselves as successful and act as though they were, and to detail how others come to see themselves as failures and act accordingly, provides in the final analysis an opportunity to intervene so as to expand the numbers of winners and diminish the numbers of losers. For that reason above all others, labeling theory merits our attention.

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Projects for Further Exploration

1. Using the basic ideas of the theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter, consider two theoretical perspectives that you could use to help understand a specific situation that influenced your schooling. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in explaining this situation?
2. Go to your library (or library's databases for searching journals) and find the most recent issue of *Sociology of Education*. Look at one or two articles in this journal, glancing through the first part of each article, and see if you can figure out which theoretical approach the authors used in their research.
3. Look around your current classroom and see if you can recognize any outward evidence of the theoretical arguments presented in this chapter. For example, are students all from the same social class background? If so, why? Is the curriculum structured for particular purposes in terms of maintaining social stability or the power structure in society? Discuss this with others in your class to see if you came up with similar examples and explanations.

Chapter 2 Studying Schools: Research Methods in Education

In Chapter 1, we introduced some of the theories that social scientists and educators use to explain how schools work. However, theories are not descriptions of what is happening in schools; they are explanations that can be applied to what is happening. Research is used to see if the theories are supported in real educational institutions. Researchers use theoretical explanations to formulate questions that are the basis for systematic examinations. There are a variety of different ways to study students and schools, all of which offer valuable insights into education today.

The articles on education that you will read in this book and elsewhere depend on these different methods of social science research, offering unique pictures of what is happening in schools. Understanding the research methods used in articles you read is important because the methods used to collect data can influence the descriptions of what is happening in education, as illustrated in the article by Elizabeth J. Allan and Mary Madden. Furthermore, you may be in a position to work with research in education, and this chapter provides information on some of the techniques used.

So, let's get down to work! Social science research methodology is a very large area to study, and we can only provide a brief overview here. Research methods are often grouped into two large categories: quantitative and qualitative methods. We instinctively divide these two ways of collecting data based on the quantification of data using numbers. However, quantification of data can be used in qualitative as well as quantitative research. It is easier to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative methods if you focus on the way the data are collected, rather than the way the data are analyzed. For example, we can collect data on how students respond to new teaching innovation in a classroom by asking them to fill out a survey with questions. We might ask how much they have learned from using this new teaching innovation on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being "A great deal" and 1 being "Nothing." Or we can go into the same classroom and observe the students in a lesson using this new teaching technique and draw conclusions from these observations. In the first instance, we are collecting data from the student that are already defined by what we know about the teaching innovation, and we can formulate hypotheses and develop measures to test these hypotheses, such as those using the numbers 1 to 10, which can be used later in a quantitative analysis. This is referred to as inductive analysis: We develop our research study based upon what we know of the subject. In the second instance, we begin by observing and then develop a way of analyzing what we see. This is referred to as deductive analysis. For the most part, quantitative methods use data that are collected and coded prior to quantitative analysis, whereas in qualitative methods, any quantification emerges from the process of analyzing the data during or after they have been collected. Researchers who use quantitative data spend a great deal of time before collecting the data organizing the ways in which they will collect their data based upon prior studies, their hypotheses, and what they know of the subject, whereas researchers using qualitative methods rely more on developing an understanding of the subject with emerging observations.

Let's consider an example testing Bernstein's theory of "restricted and elaborated codes" (described in Chapter 1) using quantitative and qualitative methods. Using a quantitative research design, we can develop a survey

instrument with quantifiable measures of social class, as well as measures of elaborated and restricted codes that Bernstein developed in his theory. Of course, we would spend a lot of time developing these measures, but if the measures are valid, we can easily give them to thousands of individuals, thus testing Bernstein's theory. On the other hand, we could also go into upper-class, middle-class, and working-class schools and observe classrooms to see how children respond to materials taught in schools. Although the classrooms cannot be identical—that would be impossible to find—we pick our classrooms carefully to study the same age and same subject matter and perhaps even the same area of the country. Then, we may discover some interesting differences that may or may not support Bernstein's theory about the use of elaborated and restricted codes varying by the social class background of children in classrooms. The first reading in this chapter by Allan and Madden provides an excellent example of how quantitative and qualitative methods can be used to study an issue in education, in their case the "chilly climate" for women on college campuses.

With this basic distinction between qualitative and quantitative research designs in mind and an understanding that there are many variations that fall within these two categories, we move to describing in greater detail the nuances of these two approaches.

Issues in Quantitative Methods

Every research method has advantages and disadvantages, and quantitative methods are no exception. One major advantage of using quantitative methodology is that you can study a very large group of individuals or educational institutions. The coding of data before you begin, as represented by various forms of surveys (Internet, mail, or in person), allows you to study larger numbers of individuals or groups in the research. Of course, we cannot study everyone whom we wish to study, so we select a sample from the larger population, ideally using random selection. Large random samples are likely to lead to more representative samples. Selecting a sample that is representative of the group you are studying is critical to being able to generalize your findings to a larger population. A large sample, however, does not always guarantee a representative sample. Therefore, as you read research studies, it is important that you understand how samples are selected. For instance, in our example earlier, would you have more confidence in a sample of 100,000 students whom teachers selected from schools in upper-class, middle-class, and working-class districts or a smaller sample of students, selected randomly by the researchers, from schools in neighborhoods of differing social class? Sampling is an important step in quantitative research method design, and it is important to understand how researchers obtain their samples.

In addition to sampling in research designs that use quantitative methods, researchers must pay special attention to how they ask questions (and code responses) about those things that they wish to measure. One issue is whether the questions are valid measures of that which is being studied. For example, does the measurement of school achievement reflect what the students in the study are actually achieving in school? Another question is whether the measure is reliable. That is, if you gave the same question to the same person at another time, would you get the same answer? Needless to say, invalid and unreliable measures do not help us to understand how schools work. Therefore, researchers work hard to develop accurate measures. As a result, you want to look carefully at the way concepts are measured in the studies you read.

Another issue that comes up in quantitative research is that of *causation*. In a survey of a group of students done at one point in time (this is called a cross-sectional research design), it is difficult to say that one thing caused another. For example, in a survey of students looking at dropping out of school, would the correlation between dropping out and grades indicate that low grades *caused* the students in the study to drop out? Or could dropping out have resulted in low grades because the students left before the end of the year? Or could family issues such as illness or sudden homelessness have interfered with some students' academic work and led to both poor grades and the students dropping out? It is not always possible to figure out what happened unless you have data from more than one point in time.

Longitudinal studies are helpful in determining causation because data are collected over time. It is better if data are collected from the same individuals over time. By collecting data this way, it is possible to follow patterns in the individuals' lives and identify things that may predict later outcomes. It would be easier to assess why students drop out in 12th grade if you also had information from these students in earlier years.

Some quantitative data are collected by large research organizations and made available to researchers to

analyze. Most of these large data sets are carefully designed longitudinal studies based on random samples of all students in the United States. Many of these data sets were collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education. Beginning in 1972, NCES began collecting longitudinal survey data starting with high school seniors (NLS-72). In 1980, NCES began collecting data from high school sophomores and seniors, a data set called High School and Beyond (HS&B). In 1988, another study was begun beginning with eighth graders (NELS-88). The most recent NCES study of high school students is the High School Longitudinal Study (HSLS:09) in which over 23,000 ninth graders were surveyed in 2009 and followed up in 2012 and 2016, in what would be their senior years in high school and college. In 1990 and 1993, the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study and the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study began to follow postsecondary students (Schmidt, 2002). Finding and collecting data from the same individuals in different panels of these research studies is a difficult task as the samples are drawn to be representative of the entire United States, and some of these data sets include more than 30,000 individuals at two or more points in time (Schmidt, 2002).

Another large data set collected by NCES (in collaboration with other federal agencies and organizations) is the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study program. This includes three longitudinal studies. One is a representative sample of the kindergarten class of 1998–1999 (ECLS-K) and the other of the birth cohort of 14,000 children born in the year 2001 (ECLS-B). NCES's goal was to "provide detailed information on children's health, early care and early school experiences" (NCES, 2010). The ECLS-K began in the fall of 1998 with a nationally representative sample of approximately 21,000 kindergarteners. These children were followed with testing in the fall and spring from kindergarten through fifth grade and then again in eighth grade. The birth cohort in ECLS-B were followed yearly until the children were in kindergarten (NCES, 2010). NCES began a third study in 2010–2011 of the kindergarten cohort that year and followed those children through the fifth grade. Imagine the value of these large, longitudinal data sets for researchers. Therefore, don't be surprised if the articles in this book use data collected by NCES or another agency.

The second reading in this chapter is by Bruce J. Biddle and David C. Berliner and reviews mostly quantitative research on the effects of class size on students. While these researchers' findings are very important, pay special attention to their discussion of the various studies they examined and their detailed description of the longitudinal research on class size. This is a very interesting introduction to both the research on class size and the issues surrounding quantitative research.

The last reading in this chapter, by Gerald W. Bracey, warns us to use caution when confronted with numbers. Although statistics are a normal part of analyzing quantitative data, Bracey provides excellent guidelines for reading those numbers so as not to be tricked by an argument that is "backed up by statistics."

Issues in Qualitative Methods

As noted previously, qualitative methods, sometimes referred to as ethnographies, are also used to study education. And as noted, qualitative methods rely primarily on observation or open interviews but can also use other techniques, such as the focus groups used in the reading by Allan and Madden. Qualitative researchers typically do not spend a lot of time worrying about sampling methods, as virtually no qualitative studies use random samples or do longitudinal analyses. Nor do qualitative researchers have to worry about the accuracy or reliability of their measures because they don't create measures ahead of time. Instead, most qualitative research begins with finding a site to observe or individuals to interview who fit the kinds of questions the researcher has in mind. For example, in this chapter, Allan and Madden collected data by writing down observations of what women said in the focus groups they conducted on one college campus. As you will see, their qualitative data analysis did not involve any statistics but rather involved quotations from and summaries of their observations.

Many researchers analyze their data as they begin their observations and continue to analyze the notes and materials for some time afterward. It is likely that data collected using qualitative methods are more "valid" than quantitative data because researchers are reporting what they found from multiple observations and directly from the sources. However, it is not as easy to make a statement about what causes what when collecting qualitative data because, unlike quantitative analyses, a researcher cannot possibly observe as many people using qualitative methods, and it is possible that the very question a researcher goes out to study may change in the course of the observations, as Edward W. Morris reports in a reading in Chapter 7. In addition to this article by Morris and the Allan and Madden reading in this chapter, there are many more examples of qualitative research in this book.

At the close of this chapter, we hope you are better prepared to understand the basis for knowledge claims that you find in the readings in this book and in other research on education that you encounter. Understanding the types of methods researchers use to do their studies is important in being a good consumer of knowledge. For example, although you may get a deep understanding of a topic with an article that used qualitative techniques, it is not a good idea to generalize beyond the setting observed. However, ideas can be taken from that qualitative study, using deductive reasoning, and often are used to create a survey of a larger population and develop questions and causal statements (called *hypotheses*) that can be tested on a large number of individuals across settings through inductive reasoning. After reading these first two chapters, you should have some basic information about the theories and methods that sociologists use to explore educational systems as portrayed by the open systems model discussed in the introduction.

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READING 7

Chilly Classrooms for Female Undergraduate Students

A Question of Method?

Elizabeth J. Allan and Mary Madden

Equal opportunity for girls and women in education has been an issue of debate for some time in sociology of education as discussed in the reading by Roslyn Arlin Mickelson in Chapter 7. This reading by Elizabeth J. Allen and Mary Madden illustrates how the method used by researchers in the analysis of issues can affect the conclusions one draws from the analyses. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research discussed in the introduction to this chapter as you read through their discussion of their use of both methods in studying this important topic. Unfortunately, we could not include the theory they used to develop their research questions as we wanted your focus in this reading to be on the methods alone, but good research requires combining theory, including results from previous research studies, with methodological rigor to add to our understanding of educational issues.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What problems with quantitative research identified in the introduction to this chapter can you see in this description of the research on the "chilly climate"?
2. What problems with qualitative research identified in the introduction to this chapter can you see in this description of the research on the "chilly climate"?
3. In terms of the topic of this reading, "chilly climate," which methodology do you think produces the most accurate and valid results?

Despite relatively widespread claims of "chilly climates," several studies have concluded that evidence of chilly climates for women in postsecondary classrooms is thin (Constantinople, Cornelius, & Gray, 1988) or no longer relevant (Drew & Work, 1998). These studies relied primarily on quantitative data (e.g., frequencies of behavior recorded through observation and self-report surveys with closed-ended questions) to reach these conclusions. Classroom climate researchers and scholars who study gender have argued that many "chilling" behaviors may go unacknowledged because they reflect socially accepted patterns of communication (Brady & Eisler, 1999; Hall & Sandler, 1982; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Sandler, Silverberg, & Hall, 1996; Valian, 1998). If this is accurate, findings derived from quantitative data alone may not be best suited to drawing conclusions about the existence or nonexistence of "chilly climates" in classrooms where socially accepted norms of communication may obscure behaviors typically identified as "chilling." The study of classroom climates is an important indicator of educational quality, not only for women but also for other historically disadvantaged groups. Thus, it is crucial that conclusions about classroom climates be accurately reported so that, if problems do exist, appropriate responses can be implemented.

From "Chilly Classrooms for Female Undergraduate Students: A Question of Method?" by E. J. Allan and

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Research Design

Research Questions

This study was designed to explore the question of whether or not research findings, claiming that chilly classrooms no longer exist in post-secondary education, are conclusions based largely upon methods of data collection and therefore, subject to change depending on the research methods employed. The following questions were used as a guide for this investigation:

1. Do quantitative data lead us to conclude that chilly classroom climates exist for undergraduates in selected fields of study?
    a. Are there differences in perceptions of chilly classroom climates for women depending on the gender enrollment pattern of their field of study?
2. Do qualitative data lead us to conclude that chilly classroom climates exist in the selected fields of study measured in question one?
    a. Are there differences in perceptions of chilly classroom climates for women depending on the gender enrollment pattern of their field of study?
3. Do different research methods lead us to draw different conclusions about chilly climates for women in classrooms?

Defining Chilly Climate

Drawn from the literature on classroom climates, the operational definition of chilly classroom climate used for this study was "a psychological climate in which students of one sex are valued differently and therefore treated differently than are students of the opposite sex" (Serex & Townsend, 1999, p. 528).

Data Sources and Methods

This study was conducted with female undergraduate juniors or seniors in six different fields of study[1] at a research university in the northeast. The fields of study were selected based on the following enrollment patterns: (a) those where men comprised the majority of students, (b) those where women comprised the majority of students, and (c) fields of study where the enrollment of men and women was more evenly distributed.

For purpose of comparison, both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed to investigate female undergraduate students' experiences of both overt and subtle behaviors that characterize chilly classroom climates for women. Our focus was on student perceptions of classroom experiences across time within a particular field of study rather than in a single course.

The first method, an electronic self-report anonymous survey, was developed based on the chilly climate literature, including a sample questionnaire provided by Sandler et al. (1996). Closed-ended questions were designed to elicit the frequency with which a student had experienced particular behaviors. Participants were

asked to respond using a 4-point scale where "never" was equal to 1, "rarely" was equal to 2, "sometimes" was equal to 3, and "often" was equal to 4. The survey questions were designed to elicit perceptions about behaviors found to be characteristic of chilly climates. For instance, scholarship related to gendered communication patterns has indicated that men are more likely to interrupt in conversations than are women (Coates, 1998; Tannen, 1990). Thus, the survey asked women to report on the extent to which they perceive they are interrupted by men in classroom discussions. The survey also included several open-ended questions to provide opportunities for respondents to offer clarifying comments.

An invitation to complete the survey was emailed to randomly selected female students in the six fields of study, including business, elementary education, engineering, physical education and kinesiology, English and journalism,[2] and psychology. Business and engineering had a male majority in student enrollment; elementary education and psychology had female majority enrollment; and English and journalism, and physical education and kinesiology, had approximately equal enrollments. The response rate was 41% ($N = 394$) with relatively equal proportions received from each field of study.

The Web-based survey was anonymous, but respondents were invited to submit their name for entry into a raffle. Drawing from this list, we invited students by email to participate in a focus group. Focus groups were organized around each field of study with the exception of physical education and kinesiology, which did not have adequate participation. Six focus groups were held with a total of 20 participants (three groups representing fields with male-majority enrollments, two with female-majority enrollments, and one with balanced distribution). Focus groups were 90–120 minutes in duration, facilitated by the investigators, audio-taped, and transcribed for analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

Frequencies were calculated for each survey item. Seven scales were created to represent constructs found to contribute to chilly classroom climates (Sandler et al., 1996). Variables describing student and faculty behaviors were assigned to scales based upon face validity. Each scale consisted of three to eight items. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the reliability of scales. [Editors' note: To review items used for the scales, see original article.]

Three scales categorized student behaviors. The first scale, *behaviors of male classmates* ($\alpha = .80$), consisted of six questions related to the frequency with which male classmates dominate discussion, space, and "collaborative" activities. The second scale, *silencing behaviors* ($\alpha = .86$), consisted of eight variables related to students' self-censoring in class due to discomfort as well as derogatory comments about women from other students. The third scale of student behaviors, *sexually offensive behaviors* ($\alpha = .85$), consisted of five questions regarding sexually suggestive humor, sexual remarks, leering, and sexual or physical contact.

Items related to faculty behaviors characteristic of chilly classroom climates for women were divided into four scales. The first of these scales, *stereotyping women* ($\alpha = .67$), consisted of three items related to stereotypical expectations and portrayal of women by faculty. The second scale, which measured faculty behaviors that contribute to chilly classroom climates, *encouraging men more than women* ($\alpha = .78$), consisted of three items

related to faculty focusing more attention and encouragement on men in the classroom. The third scale, *dismissing and demeaning women* (α =.87), consisted of eight items related to faculty behaviors that fail to take women seriously, send messages that women and their contributions are not valued, and use sexist language and materials. And the last scale, *sexually inappropriate behaviors* (α =.74), consisted of three items related to subtle and overt sexual behaviors of faculty. Mean scores and standard deviations were computed for each scale. If the mean score of the scale was equivalent to or greater than 2.5 (the midpoint), indicating the behaviors occurred more often than "rarely," authors considered the construct to be a contributing factor to a chilly classroom for women.

Respondents were assigned to one of three groups based on the gender enrollment pattern of their field of study (female majority, male majority, or proportional male/female enrollment). One-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine if these groups differed in their ratings of classroom climate. Significant differences between groups were examined using post-hoc tests (Scheffe's).

Qualitative Analysis

Responses to open-ended questions from the survey and data collected via focus groups were analyzed using established methods of qualitative inquiry, including coding and categorizing processes that use both inductive and deductive approaches (Miles & Huberman, 1984). A deductive analytic approach was also used in response to the research questions "Do qualitative data lead us to conclude that chilly classroom climates exist in the selected fields of study?" and "Are there differences in perceptions of chilly classroom climates for women depending on the gender enrollment pattern of their field of study?"

Based on the literature about chilly classroom climates in postsecondary education (Sandler et al., 1996), we looked specifically for confirming and disconfirming evidence of the following: encouragement and/or discouragement; valuing women's contributions; defining women by their sexuality and/or unwanted sexual attention; female representation/inclusion in the curriculum; reinforcing traditional or stereotypical views of women and gender roles; questioning women's competence; gender differences related to space, time, and attention; and gender differences related to peer interactions.

Each of these categories served as a theme in the deductive coding process. Once all data were coded by category, they were also tagged with a code identifying whether the source of the behavior was attributed to male peers, faculty, or female peers. In some cases, data units were tagged with multiple "source" codes. Finally, in an effort to explore further if the data could provide insights as to why quantitative and qualitative methodologies might lead to different findings, a third layer of coding focused on the types of explanations offered by participants in relation to chilly classroom behaviors. The themes generated through this process included denial, minimizing, trivializing, blaming women, meritocracy, and sexism. We explore these further in the Discussion section of this article.

Findings

Quantitative Findings

Quantitative survey data portrayed a complex picture of the classroom climate. The frequency rates for individual variables suggested that chilly classroom climates existed for a portion of survey respondents. Eleven of the 19 student behaviors and one of 16 faculty behaviors were reported to occur sometimes or often by 25% or more of women responding to the survey. The following is a list of these behaviors and the percentage of women that reported their occurrence at least sometimes: men taking over leadership in a small group activity (58%); sexually suggestive stories, jokes, or humor (55%); men taking up more class time or space (41%); censoring themselves in classes because they felt uncomfortable (40%); disparaging remarks about women's behaviors (37%); being interrupted by men (35%); sexual remarks, including discussion about personal or sexual matters (34%); body language such as staring, leering, or sexual gestures (33%); men ignoring their ideas or input (28%); pressure to avoid being seen as a supporter of women's issues (25%); and disparaging remarks about women's roles or career interests (25%). Faculty paying attention to the most talkative students who are male was reported to occur sometimes or often by 43% of the women.

When data were reduced to scales to represent constructs that contribute to chilly classroom climates, descriptive statistics indicated that women in this study rarely experienced the behaviors. Mean ratings on scales representing student behaviors characteristic of chilly classroom climates—behaviors of male classmates (M = 1.99), silencing behaviors (M = 1.81), and sexually offensive behaviors (M = 1.87)—indicated that these rarely occur. One-way ANOVAs … show that there were no differences in *silencing behaviors* or *sexually offensive behaviors* scales based on the gender enrollment pattern of respondents' fields of study. There was a difference in reporting of *male behaviors* contributing to chilly classroom climates based on gender enrollment patterns. Fields of study with a male majority reported a higher occurrence of behaviors characteristic of a chilly climate. However, it is possible that male behaviors were identified as occurring more frequently in male-majority fields simply because there were more men in these classrooms.

Mean ratings of the four scales representing faculty behaviors that contribute to chilly climate—stereotyping women (M = 1.41), encouraging men more than women (M = 1.82), dismissing or demeaning women (M = 1.36), and sexually inappropriate behaviors (M = 1.38)—indicated that students perceived these faculty behaviors as occurring less than rarely. A one-way ANOVA … revealed no differences between students from fields of study with differing gender enrollment patterns regarding faculty behaviors that encourage men more than women or that are sexually inappropriate. However, significant differences were found on scales that measure behaviors related to stereotyping of women and dismissing and demeaning women. Respondents in female-majority fields reported a significantly higher occurrence of behaviors on both of these scales than did respondents in male-majority fields. This finding can be supported by gender schema and privilege frameworks that explain how chilling practices can be produced in classrooms regardless of the sex of the instructor. It may also be a reflection of the faculty/instructors in these particular fields at this institution. Further attention to this dynamic is needed in future studies.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate overall classroom environment for women using a 3-point scale ranging from 1 (*very supportive*) to 3 (*not at all supportive*). The mean rating of 1.42 indicates that respondents characterized the classroom climate as very supportive to somewhat supportive, with no significant differences between groups.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative data indicated that behaviors characteristic of chilly classroom climates occurred across groups regardless of enrollment pattern. The data reflected some differences in the magnitude of specific types of behaviors; however, none of the groups were exempt from reporting chilly classroom behaviors. We describe qualitative data according to the primary themes that emerged in the analysis, including discouragement, invisibility, time and space, questioning women's competence, and defining women by their sexuality. While data we share here focus specifically on behaviors characteristic of chilly classroom climates, some participants who reported these experiences also described feeling "comfortable" and "equal" in their classrooms. We begin by discussing the data related to academic discouragement… .

Discouragement: "I just got the sense that … he was trying to drive the women away."

Women enrolled in male-majority fields reported experiencing the most overt forms of discouragement by faculty, as exemplified by the above quotation from a female engineering major. Not all students reported feeling as though their instructors or peers discouraged them, and for those who did, the overt behaviors were often isolated to one or two faculty members. Often, the discouraging behaviors were of a more subtle nature. For instance, one participant described a certain professor who favored men over women, explaining that this faculty member would call on male students more frequently than he would call on female students during class sessions. She said he would "take their comments over ours toward the discussion; we'd say something, he'd just kind of pass [us] over. If a guy said something, he'd have to stop and discuss it." …

Sometimes the examples were more reflective of female students' feelings of discouragement resulting from the perceived absence of faculty guidance or intervention. For example, a participant from a field with proportional male and female enrollment reported the following:

> I had a physics lab a couple of years ago that was a horrible experience for me because I wanted to be an equal partner in the lab with the men in my group but they were … I mean it's horrible to say that they were far superior to me in terms of doing that work and I tried my darndest, but in a sense I had to relinquish some of the control to them because it's not my field and I tried so hard and I participated as much as I could, but I was really just a shadow and that was very frustrating … feeling dumb in a situation like that, feeling like I knew that I should have been able to do it as well, but really couldn't.

Other times, examples were reflective of female students' discouragement resulting from the attitudes and

behaviors of their male peers. For instance, when describing her experience as a female civil engineering major in a lab setting, one student summed up the attitude of her male classmates as "they don't let you do crap." She elaborated, "Even if you show up in overalls and a t-shirt and you're like, I'm ready," the response is "no." Another participant shared similar experiences with male peers in a male-majority classroom:

> Yeah, it's funny because when I was growing up I was the youngest kid of three girls, and so my dad taught me a lot about tools, fixing cars, things like that, so I feel very capable and comfortable but I don't think anyone who would meet me would really expect that because I don't volunteer that kind of information 'cause it's not really that important so they just assume that I can't do things.

These examples provide a snapshot of some of the types of gendered behaviors that can contribute to classroom environments where faculty and male peers have discouraged female students. These incidents of "discouragement" differ from other types of chilling behaviors in that they were plainly seen and interpreted as discouraging by female students participating in this study.

Invisibility and Marginalization: "It's like 'hello.' Didn't I just say that 10 minutes ago?"

While the previous examples portray some of the more overt types of behaviors that discourage women and contribute to chilly classroom climates, the greater share of participant comments reflected behaviors of a more subtle nature. For instance, some women reported feeling they are disregarded by male peers in their classrooms, as a participant from a male-majority field explained: "We got put into groups to do a project… . We had to pick an organization … and the guys would not even consider my topics… . They wouldn't even listen to my suggestions and I totally felt like I was completely ignored." Others described similar experiences of male students who "talk over" and "overpower female students" in classroom discussions, especially in small group discussions where faculty members are less likely to be facilitating the dialogue. For example, a second participant from a male-majority field reported:

> I noticed that … when I was working in a group, I couldn't even make a suggestion of something to do and the males would just like overlook it and pretend you didn't even say anything… . Then one of them would say it maybe just like 10 minutes later, and everybody would say, "Oh, yeah, that's a good idea." … But it seems like it doesn't matter if it's coming from a female.

Another student from a male-majority field described similar feelings about male peers in class group work: "But that also has a lot to do with the men taking over when I'm trying to do something in a lab. It's the same thing. It could be that they just want to make their points."

Another factor involved in chilly classroom climates is the lack of representation and inclusion of women in the curriculum, in classroom activities, or in both. Students in all disciplinary groups commented on this aspect and offered a variety of examples and interpretations… .

One English major (a field with proportional male and female enrollment) reported that, when asked why the syllabus in a literary theory course did not include any works by female authors, her professor replied, "There wasn't any writing from females back then on this particular topic." While women's access to education and print media has indeed been limited during particular historical periods, the professor offered no further explanation, leaving this student and others in the class to presume women did not contribute anything worth studying or that women did not influence the historical development of literary theory in any significant way. Similarly, a participant from a female-majority field commented that she understood times were different for women "like in the 1800s," but she felt that her instructors "should mention some more of the women from back then and what they did" because "I'm sure they had great ideas."

These examples provide a glimpse of the ways in which female students reported being ignored or marginalized by having their own contributions to class discussion overlooked or by the lack of women's contributions included in the formal curriculum. Participants also reported other ways in which they were marginalized in classrooms. For instance, they described examples of male peers taking up more of the professor's time and attention in the classroom. When asked to comment on interactions with male peers in the classroom, one student from a male-majority field exclaimed, "I'm interrupted all the time and it really bothers me a lot!" Other students shared similar experiences… .

Like the findings related to overt discouragement of female students, participants who were enrolled in male-majority fields provided the greater share of examples related to feelings of invisibility and marginalization in the classroom. Nevertheless, even women enrolled in female-majority fields reported that such behaviors occur.

Questioning Women's Competence: "He was like, 'you can't lift that; you're a girl.'"

Stereotypical views of gender roles emerged as a prominent theme in the analysis of focus group data for this study. Comments related to this characteristic of chilly classroom climates cut across fields of study, but they were most pronounced in the fields with a male majority. For example, one student reported being the only female student in a lab group where one of the students "took cheap shots all semester." She elaborated, "I had no idea why, just … making comments, saying I couldn't do it because I was a girl. We were doing concrete testing… . He was like, 'you can't lift that; you're a girl.'" In other instances, students reported that their male peers questioned their capability or their motivations for joining a field with a majority of men. Referring to her male peers in such a field, one student reported, "They just assume I can't do things." When asked why her male peers would assume this, she explained,

> I don't know, I like to wear girly clothes… . I'm a feminine girl and I don't really deny it so I guess that infers that I'm not comfortable dealing with grease and getting my hands dirty when in fact, I love doing stuff like that.

Another student recounted similar experiences, saying she gets the "oh you're a girl look" and explaining, "It's

second nature for guys to want to protect you or want to control what's going on, and you know, I'm not going to fight that initially." …

Interestingly, at the same time female students' competence is called into question based on stereotypical views of gender, these stereotypes are also used to justify women's responsibility for doing a greater share of the work. Related to group work especially, participants in this investigation reported they are often expected to shoulder the greater burden of responsibility for keeping group members on task and ensuring they follow through with assignments. For example, one participant from a male-majority field shared that group projects were a place where she saw gender differences playing out:

> When I get into those [group projects] in classes, it always seems like all the guys want me to be the smart one of the group … because I was just kind of quiet in class and take my notes.

Another participant described being the only woman in a group of 11 students assigned to work on a course project in which she was delegated to be the "leader." When we probed further to inquire what the term *leader* meant in this context, she replied that there was no specific role; rather, it was just that "nobody [else] has the motivation … just nobody has the ambition or desire to organize this." She described how the professor asked her to take on this role since he knew "it would get done." In this case, the term *leader* might be understood as a substitute for a group secretary. Similarly, when asked about group work, another participant commented, "The guys are always less prepared." …

This student further explained her experience of taking on the role of group leader/secretary,

> Nobody … none of the guys got it to me on time. One of them didn't even send it to me until like two hours before class the next day. And then when he sent me his part of the paper, it was horrible. Not to be mean, but it sucked. And so then I'm trying to put a paper together, completely redo the whole thing and after putting in all this effort, you know we get like a 70 or something on the paper and when I put in all that effort and I still get the same grade as them, that's when it's hard.

References to traditional gender roles not only were made with regard to male attitudes toward women, but also occasionally reflected women's internalization of traditional gender roles and sometimes revealed their discomfort with and/or (mis)understandings about equity for women. For example, a participant from a male-majority field commented: "There's reverse prejudice in some instances … like we have the women's something center right? Is there a men's resource center? I'm more scared of those feminists than I am of men."

Heterosexism—the centrality of heterosexuality and the implicit perception that it is the only normal way of expressing one's sexuality—may be another factor to consider in making sense of the data from this study. Because of heterosexism and homophobia, those who do identify as (or are perceived to be) gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered are often subject to harassment, ridicule, and marginalization. In a climate where

heterosexism and sexism work in tandem to privilege heterosexuality as the norm, stereotypes of feminism abound, and some young women fear their real and/or perceived association with feminism may be mistakenly interpreted as anti-male and/or identification as a lesbian (Hogeland, 1994). This dynamic emerged in our conversations as several students in different focus groups shared worries that classmates might perceive them to be lesbians if they were to voice their concerns about the absence of women in the curriculum. In another instance, a focus group participant from a female-majority field described a classroom exercise in a class where the professor was explaining "3D imagery or something … and he was passing around [a device] … to see 3D … and it was really of naked women." He said, "'the women (students) might not want to look at this.' … If I looked at it, I felt like other people might think I was a lesbian or something." She continued, "I did look at it quickly just to see what he was talking about… . It kind of made me feel uncomfortable because I was looking at it wondering what people were thinking of me."

Defining Women by Their Sexuality: "Dazed look on their face … ga ga eyes"

Another characteristic of chilly classroom climates is the tendency for women to be evaluated "more on the basis of their attractiveness, sexuality, and personality than their intellectual competence and abilities" (Sandler et al., 1996, p. 15). Participants in this investigation described these types of behaviors as well. While several students relayed experiences they characterized as inappropriate, other students described behaviors that were more subtle to them, but not without power to affect the climate of the classroom. For instance, one student relayed her experience in a predominantly male classroom,

> If I have ever noticed a difference in gender, it's when there's someone standing in front of the class… . There's an attractive young lady up there, you can kind of see them getting squirmy in their seats… . if there is like a cute girl up there, they're definitely not listening to her at all. There is a dazed look on their face.

She elaborated on how this affects her personally when she's in a class where students have to make many presentations, "we have to dress up… . You know, and I'm always like, okay I'm standing up in front of 60 boys; what am I going to wear?"

Related to faculty behaviors, a number of students described instances where professors or instructors used sexual humor, innuendo, and explicit sexual attention, making students uncomfortable. A participant from a field of study with proportional male/female enrollment reported the following example:[3]

> Yeah, he's very outrageous in the classroom. He makes women get up and dance. There was one girl in class who was a dancer and she was very into it. He just egged on all this weird gender stuff in the classroom… . There were times when I was really mad because he put people in situations that they … put me in situations that I didn't feel comfortable being in, but also I had to watch other people and a lot of the men, they were into that. They responded to him on that level, I think, and they

> wanted to talk about what they thought about women and assumptions and things. And some of the girls, like the girl who wanted to dance in the class, got off on it… . It wasn't appropriate in a writing classroom, I don't think… . He alienated quite a few of us.

Another participant, from a male-majority field, described the following experience: "One professor would come up behind me while seated and grab my shoulders or occasionally he would lean in toward my neck and comment on how good I smelled." Other participants provided further examples …

Some participants echoed the perception that the male professors they described were relying upon sexually suggestive comments and jokes to develop rapport with students—to be seen as "cool." Some reported being confused by such experiences; others said they were "shocked," "uncomfortable," and "humiliated." Some students clearly differentiated humor used by some faculty members as "sexual, but not sexist."

Discussion

This study grew out of a desire to investigate whether the choice of data collection methods could help to explain why some researchers studying classroom climates for undergraduate women reach differing conclusions about the existence of a chilly climate. Drawing conclusions about the presence of chilly classroom climates for women in this investigation gave rise to some thought-provoking questions.

It is conceivable that markedly different conclusions could be drawn based on the data generated from this investigation. If conclusions were drawn from frequency data alone, some researchers could assert that at least 25% of female undergraduate students at this institution experience chilly classroom climates. If conclusions were drawn from mean values derived from the scales in this investigation, some might conclude that chilly classroom climates are rare. However, if researchers drew conclusions based on the qualitative data alone (from open-ended survey comments and focus groups), they could assert that chilly classroom climates are not uncommon to female undergraduate students at this institution. They could conclude not only that chilly classroom climates persist but also that the magnitude of the problem is quite disturbing. Based on this investigation, it is clear that data collection and methods of analysis are important factors to consider when evaluating claims about classroom climates for girls/women. Further, data concerning gender and classroom climates can be interpreted quite differently depending upon a researcher's conceptual framework guiding analytic and interpretive decision making.

As is typically the case, data analysis for this study involved a series of choices and decisions. First, we made a decision to reduce data into scales that measured constructs related to chilly classroom climates. This approach is supported by the contention that chilly classroom climates for women result from an accumulation of overt and subtle discriminatory behaviors. Related variables were merged to create scales, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze these scales. Subsequently, we were faced with a decision to determine a cutoff point for a mean value indicative of a chilly climate. We decided that if the mean value indicated the set of behaviors had occurred more than "rarely," this would be sufficient to suggest the presence of chilly classroom climates. This series of decisions about how to analyze and interpret data from this investigation led us to conclude that

chilly classroom climates are rare at the institution under investigation. Yet the net result of these decisions obscures the experiences of roughly one quarter of the undergraduate women who completed the survey. These women reported that 11 of 19 student behaviors and 1 of 16 faculty behaviors known to contribute to chilly classroom climates occurred at least sometimes.

What proportion of women must report chilly classroom behaviors before we conclude that such environments are indeed inhospitable for women? The answer to this question may vary according to a researcher's perspective. Drawing the conclusion (from survey data) that chilly classroom climates did not exist, when 25% of survey respondents identified chilling behaviors in their classrooms, was troubling to us. Discounting these behaviors because a larger proportion of women do not report them might be compared to suggesting that the presence of sexual violence is not a problem for women on college campuses because a majority of women are not direct victims of this violence.[4] Such an assertion fails to recognize the way in which the presence of sexual violence can circumscribe women's lives by creating a climate in which they are regularly reminded of the potential to experience such violence directly and adjust their daily lives accordingly. In a similar way, even women who have not been the direct recipients of chilly classroom behaviors may have witnessed them directed toward others in their classrooms or may have heard about such experiences from friends. These "ripple effects" of chilly classroom behaviors also contribute to creating inhospitable classroom climates for female students.

Valian's (1998) delineation of gender schemas, or the normalization of differential treatment on the basis of gender, is another factor to be considered while interpreting data from this study. Sadker and Sadker (1994) documented unintentional gender bias in school classrooms. Often, these gender-biased behaviors were difficult for teachers and students to identify precisely because the behaviors contributing to gender-bias reflected taken-for-granted gender norms that are rarely called into question (Valian, 1998). Similarly, it is conceivable that many participants in this study do not regularly question taken-for-granted gender norms in society. This lack of critical consciousness related to gender norms and sex inequality creates a dilemma in drawing conclusions from data analyzed via surveys or focus group discussions. As the literature related to gender norms makes clear, many of the behaviors characteristic of "chilly climates" reflect socially accepted patterns of communication. As such, it is not uncommon for many types of discriminatory behaviors to be interpreted as "normal" and/or justified in order to fit them into an acceptable or comfortable worldview (Johnson, 1997; Valian, 1998).

Similar to challenges experienced in efforts to promote anti-racist consciousness, Hogeland (1994) has described some barriers to adopting a feminist consciousness for girls and young women, including fear of complexity, fear of thinking, fear of change, fear of politics, and fear of anger. Acknowledging the reality of sexism can be deeply troubling, as it requires reframing one's worldview… .

Numerous scholars have described the cultural "myth of meritocracy" (Johnson, 2001; Mantsios, 2001; McNamee & Miller, 2004) as a substantial impediment to acknowledging a wide range of discriminatory practices. Operating within this mythical framework, individuals are firmly rooted in seeing social life as fair and equitable—with one's station in life primarily a measure of the individual's work ethic rather than of race,

class, gender/sex (and other types of) privilege, and discrimination in society. This discourse emerged in the thinking of a number of study participants who felt that if students simply worked hard they would succeed… .

Gender schemas, heterosexism, the discourse of meritocracy, and fear of feminism may help to explain impediments to acknowledging and understanding chilly classroom and gender-biased behaviors. As such, it seems prudent that these be considered in determining which methodological approaches to employ when studying gender dynamics of classroom climates. In this investigation, the focus group method and the open-ended survey questions elicited different kinds of data than the quantitative portion of the survey elicited. This outcome aligns with perspectives shared by Madriz (2000) and others who claim the collectivist dynamic of focus groups are particularly helpful for uncovering the realities of women's daily experiences… .

Further, researchers also have acknowledged how the collective nature of the focus group method may mitigate the influence of the interviewer by shifting power away from the researcher and toward the group (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999; Wilkinson, 1999a, 1999b), fostering "free expression of ideas, encouraging the members of the group to speak up," and empowering participants by validating their voices and experiences (Madriz, 2000, p. 838).

While strengths of the focus group method, as Madriz (2000) and others describe, may make it well suited to collecting data on classroom climates, it is not without limitations. One criticism of focus group data is that group dynamics may introduce bias or may potentially skew the data. However, Marshall and Rossman (1999) point out that an implicit assumption of the focus group method is that individual attitudes and beliefs are not formed in isolation. Krueger and Casey (2000) assert that participant interactions in focus group interviews enhance data quality, as "participants tend to provide checks and balances on each other, which weeds out false or extreme views" (Patton, 2002, p. 386).

In this investigation, the collective nature of the focus groups appeared to contribute to participants' recollection of classroom behaviors. For instance, in several cases where students came to the focus group with the expressed intent of reporting the *absence* of any gender-biased behaviors in their classrooms, they later described one, or sometimes numerous, instances of chilly classroom behaviors that they had "forgotten" until hearing another participant describe a similar experience. Over the course of our facilitation of the focus groups, we began to recognize a pattern in the cadence of the group discussions beginning with very little dialogue—sometimes silence—which shifted over the 60–90 minute period. The progression was usually sparked when one participant described an experience that resonated with others in the group, who then proceeded to detail classroom experiences they previously neglected to identify as "chilly."

Limitations and Soundness of the Investigation

The sample was drawn from a single institution with the survey distributed to a randomly selected group of female students (except in engineering, where all female students received a survey due to limited numbers of women in that field of study). Despite this, we had very little control over who, within that sample, chose to respond; consequently, some bias may be inherent in the self-selection of respondents.

Focus group participation averaged 3–4 students per group. These participants were invited from those students who completed the Web-based survey and who had indicated a willingness to be contacted for further participation in the study. It could be argued that these participants might overrepresent survey respondents who reported chilly classroom climates. However, it is possible the converse is true in this case. For example, in four of the six focus groups held for this study, at least one of the participants explicitly articulated that her interest in participating was solely to communicate that gender bias *did not* exist in her field of study.

In any research project, potential researcher bias should be considered throughout the investigation. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) have pointed out, researchers are multicultural subjects and as such, their particular conceptions of self and others may influence the design and analysis of an investigation. As White, middle-class, academic women, we came to this study with particular interests and experiences shaping our perceptions of the research problem. Recognizing our potential biases, we implemented a number of strategies designed to promote trustworthiness of findings, including researcher reflexivity, peer debriefing, and negative case analysis (Merriam, 2002).

In light of this, we worked to promote the soundness and validity of the findings through careful attention to detail, triangulation of data sources, and methods of analysis. We expect the findings to provide insights and assertions that are transferable to other settings and that can serve as a guide for further inquiry and more careful evaluation of research claims about classroom climates… .

Notes

1. We use the term "field of study" in reference to students' major area of study including both academic disciplines such as psychology or professional fields such as engineering.

2. English and journalism students were grouped to represent one field of study in order to increase the sample size to be comparable to the other fields of study participating in this investigation.

3. The university had a sexual harassment policy at the time of this study, though it was not referenced by any of the students in this investigation.

4. According to Fisher, Cullen, and Turner (2000), 27.7 per 1,000 college women are victims of attempted or completed rapes.

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READING 8

Small Class Size and Its Effects

Bruce J. Biddle and David C. Berliner

Debates over ideal class size have pitted policy makers and politicians against each other, and moved many researchers to study the issue. Politicians argue for larger versus smaller schools based on "the research," but the research presents a mixed picture. The question that is sometimes overlooked is the effect of large versus small classrooms on equality of educational opportunity, especially in overcrowded schools and classes. Biddle and Berliner present an overview of research and projects addressing size issues, especially the relationship of size to achievement of students. This study provides an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of using quantitative research to support policy issues on this important topic, the impact of class size on equal opportunity of academic achievement.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What does research show about class size and achievement?
2. What problems with quantitative research identified in the introduction to this chapter can you see in this description of the research on class size?
3. What features of quantitative research do the authors identify that lead to stronger studies on the effects of class size?

Studies of the impact of class size on student achievement may be more plentiful than for any other issue in education. Although one might expect this huge research effort to yield clear answers about the effects of class size, sharp disagreements about these studies' findings have persisted.

From "Small Class Size and Its Effects," by B. J. Biddle and D. C. Berliner, *Educational Leadership, 59*(5), pp. 12–23. Reprinted with permission from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Advocacy groups take opposite stances. The American Federation of Teachers, for example, asserts that

> taken together, these studies provide compelling evidence that reducing class size, particularly for younger children, will have a positive effect on student achievement. (Murphy & Rosenberg, 1998, p. 3)

The Heritage Foundation, by contrast, claims that "there's no evidence that smaller class sizes alone lead to higher student achievement" (Rees & Johnson, 2000).

Reviewers of class size studies also disagree. One study contends that "large reductions in school class size promise learning benefits of a magnitude commonly believed not within the power of educators to achieve" (Glass, Cahen, Smith, & Filby, 1982, p. 50), whereas another claims that "the evidence does not offer much

reason to expect a systematic effect from overall class size reduction policies" (Hanushek, 1999, p. 158).

That the American Federation of Teachers and the Heritage Foundation sponsor conflicting judgments is easy to understand. But why have reviewers come to such divergent views about the research on class size, and what does the evidence really say?

Early Small Field Experiments

To answer these questions, we must look at several research traditions, beginning with early experiments on class size. Experiments have always been a popular research technique because investigators can assign their subjects randomly to different conditions and then compare the results of those conditions—and this human intervention can appear to provide information about causes and effects. Experiments on class size, however, are nearly always done in field settings—schools—where uncontrolled events can undermine the research and effect results.

Small experimental studies on the effects of class size began to appear in the 1920s, and scores of them emerged subsequently. In the 1960s, informal reviews of these efforts generally concluded that differences in class size generated little to no effect. By the late 1970s, however, a more sophisticated research method, meta-analysis, had been invented, which facilitated the statistical assembly of results from small-but-similar studies to estimate effects for the studies' populations. Reviewers quickly applied meta-analysis to results from early experiments in class size (Educational Research Service, 1980; Glass et al., 1982; Glass & Smith, 1979; Hedges & Stock, 1983) and eventually emerged with a consensus that short-term exposure to small classes generates—usually minor—gains in students' achievement and that those gains are greater in the early grades, in classrooms with fewer than 20 students, and for students from groups that are traditionally disadvantaged in education.

Most of these early class size experiments, however, had involved small samples, short-term exposures to small classes, only one measure of student success, and a single education context (such as one school or school district). Poor designs had also made results of some studies questionable. Researchers needed to use different strategies to ascertain the effects of long-term exposure to small classes and to assess whether the advantages of early exposure to small classes would generalize to other successes and be sustainable.

Surveys

Survey research has provided evidence on the effects of class size by analyzing naturally occurring differences in schools and classrooms and by asking whether these differences are associated with student outcomes.

Well-designed surveys can offer evidence about the impact of variables that experiments cannot manipulate—such as gender, minority status, and childhood poverty—but survey research cannot easily establish relationships between causes and effects. For example, if a survey examines a sample of schools where average class size varies and discovers that those schools with smaller classes also have higher levels of student achievement, has the survey ascertained that class size generated achievement? Hardly. Those schools with smaller classes might also have had more qualified teachers, better equipment, more up-to-date curriculums, newer school buildings, more students from affluent homes, or a more supportive community environment—factors that may also have helped generate higher levels of achievement. To use survey data to make the case for a causal relation between class size and student outcomes, then, researchers must use statistical processes that control for the competing effects of other variables.

Serious surveys of education achievement in the United States began in the 1960s with the famous Coleman report (Coleman et al., 1966). Written by authors with impressive reputations and released with great fanfare, this massive, federally funded study involved a national sample and took on many issues then facing education. Today, most people remember the report for its startling claim that student achievement is almost totally influenced by the students' families and peers and not by the characteristics of their schools. This claim was widely accepted—indeed, was greeted with dismay by educators and endorsed with enthusiasm by fiscal conservatives—despite flaws in the report's methods that were noted by thoughtful critics.

Since then, researchers have conducted surveys to establish whether differences in school funding or in the reforms that funds can buy—such as small class sizes—are associated with desired education outcomes. Most of these surveys, usually designed by economists, have involved questionable design features and small samples that did not represent the wide range of U.S. schools, classrooms, or students… .

Fortunately, a few well-designed, large-scale surveys have investigated class size directly (see, for example, Elliott, 1998; Ferguson, 1991; Ferguson & Ladd, 1996; Wenglinsky, 1997). These studies concluded that long-term exposure to small classes in the early grades can be associated with student achievement; that the extra gains that such exposure generates may be substantial; and that such gains may not appear with exposure to small classes in the upper grades or at the secondary school levels.

Trial Programs and Large Field Experiments

Other types of small class research have addressed some of the shortcomings of early experiments and surveys. In the 1980s, state legislatures in the United States began political debates about the effects of small class size, and some states began trial programs or large-scale field experiments… .

Tennessee's Project STAR

Such an experiment shortly appeared in Tennessee's Project STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio), arguably the largest and best-designed field experiment ever undertaken in education (Finn & Achilles, 1990; Finn, Gerber, Achilles, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2001; Folger, 1989; Grissmer, 1999; Krueger, 1999, 2000; Krueger & Whitmore, 2001; Mosteller, 1995; Nye, Hedges, & Konstantopoulos, 1999).

In the mid-1980s, the Tennessee legislature funded a four-year study to compare the achievement of early-grade students assigned randomly to one of three conditions: *standard classes* (with one certificated teacher and more than 20 students); *supplemented classes* (with one teacher and a full-time, noncertificated teacher's aide); and *small classes* (with one teacher and about 15 students). The study began with students entering kindergarten in 1985 and called for each student to attend the same type of class for four years. To control variables, the study asked each participating school to sponsor all three types of classes and to assign students and teachers randomly to each type. Participating teachers received no prior training for the type of class they were to teach.

The project invited all the state's primary schools to be in the study, but each participating school had to agree to remain in the program for four years; to have the class *rooms* needed for the project; and to have at least 57 kindergarten students so that all three types of classes could be set up. Participating schools received no additional support other than funds to hire additional teachers and aides. These constraints meant that troubled schools and those that disapproved of the study—and schools that were too small, crowded, or underfunded—would not participate in the STAR program, so the sample for the first year involved "only" 79 schools, 328 classrooms, and about 6,300 students. Those schools came from all corners of the state, however, and represented urban, inner-city, suburban, and rural school districts. The sample population included majority students, a sizable number of African American students, and students receiving free school lunches.

At the beginning of each year of the study, the sample population changed somewhat. Some participating students had moved away, been required to repeat kindergarten, or left the study because of poor health. Other families moved into the districts served by STAR schools, however, and their children filled the vacant seats. Also, because attending kindergarten was not then mandatory in Tennessee, some new students entered the STAR program in the 1st grade.

In addition, some parents tried to move their children from one type of STAR class to another, but administrators allowed only a few students to move from a standard class to a supplemented class or vice versa. By the end of the study, then, some students had been exposed to a STAR class for four years, but others had spent a shorter time in such classes. These shifts might have biased STAR results, but Alan Krueger's careful

analysis (1999) concluded that such bias was minimal.

Near the end of each year, STAR students took the Stanford Achievement Test battery and received separate scores for reading, word-study skills, and mathematics. Results from these tests were similar for students who were in the standard and supplemented classes, indicating that the presence of untrained aides in supplemented classes did *not* contribute to improving student achievement. Results for small classes were sharply different, however, with long-term exposure to small classes generating substantially higher levels of achievement and with gains becoming greater the longer that students were in small classes… .

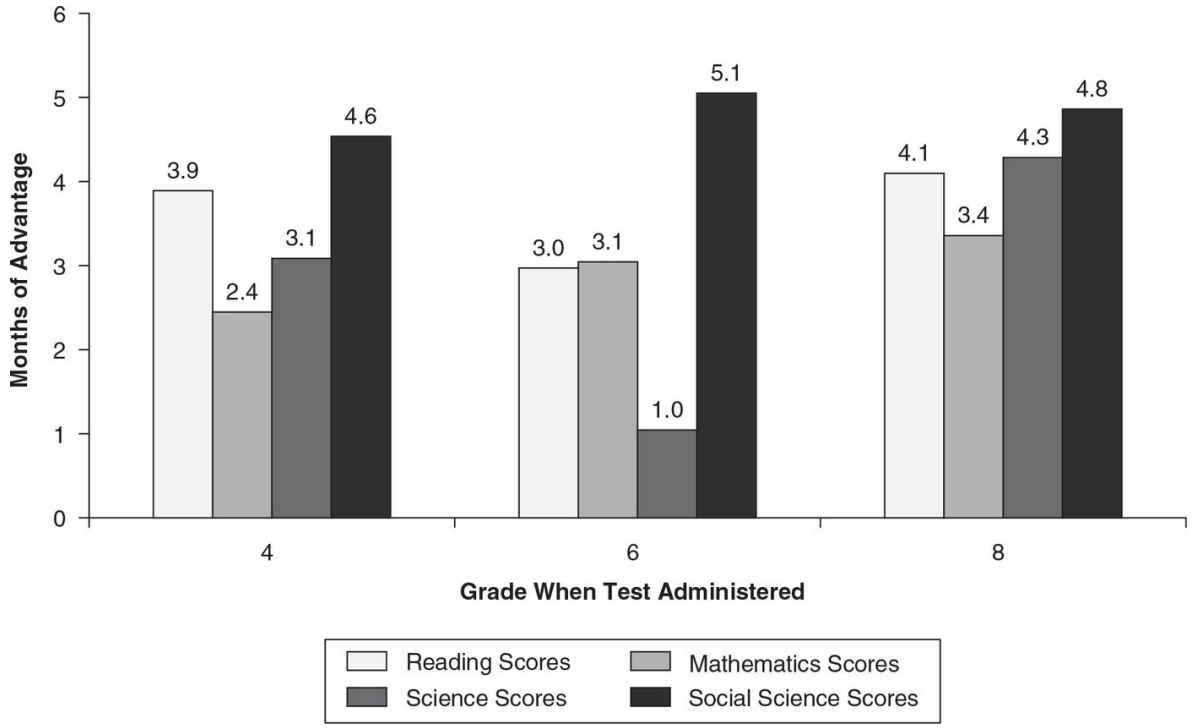
STAR investigators found that the students in small classes were 0.5 months ahead of the other students by the end of kindergarten, 1.9 months ahead at the end of 1st grade, 5.6 months ahead in 2nd grade, and 7.1 months ahead by the end of 3rd grade. The achievement advantages were smaller, although still impressive, for students who were only exposed to one, two, or three years of small classes. STAR investigators found similar (although not identical) results for word-study skills and mathematics.

Small-class advantages appeared for all types of students participating in the study. The gains were similar for boys and girls, but they were greater for impoverished students, African American students, and students from inner-city schools—groups that are traditionally disadvantaged in education.

These initial STAR findings were impressive, but would students who had been exposed to small classes in the early grades retain their extra gains when they entered standard size classes in 4th grade? To answer this question, the Tennessee legislature authorized a second study to examine STAR student outcomes during subsequent years of schooling.

At the end of each year, until they were in the 12th grade in 1997–1998, these students took the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills and received scores in reading, mathematics, science, and social science. The results showed that average students who had attended small classes were months ahead of those from standard classes for each topic assessed at each grade level. Figure 8.1 displays results from some of these tests, showing, for example, that when typical students who had attended small classes in the early grades reached grade 8, they were 4.1 months ahead in reading, 3.4 months ahead in mathematics, 4.3 months ahead in science, and 4.8 months ahead in social science.

Figure 8.1 Average Months of Grade-Equivalent Advantage in Achievement Scores for Students Who Experienced One or More Years of Small Classes



Students who had attended small classes also enjoyed other advantages in the upper grades. They earned better grades on average, and fewer dropped out or had to repeat a year. And when they reached high school, more small class students opted to learn foreign languages, study advanced-level courses, and take the ACT and SAT college entrance examinations. More graduated from high school and were in the top 25 percent of their classes. Moreover, initial published results suggest that these upper-grade effects were again larger for students who are traditionally disadvantaged in education… .

[O]f students who opted to take the ACT or SAT exams as high school seniors, roughly 44 percent of those from small classes took one or both of these tests, whereas only 40 percent of those from standard classes did so. The difference, however, was far greater for African American students. Instruction in small classes during the early grades had eliminated more than half of the traditional disadvantages that African American students have displayed in participation rates in the ACT and SAT testing programs.

Taken together, findings from the STAR project have been impressive, but they are not necessarily definitive. The STAR student sample did not quite match the U.S. population, for example, because very few Hispanic, Native American, and immigrant (non-English-speaking) families were living in Tennessee in the middle-1980s. Also, news about the greater achievement gains of small classes leaked out early during the STAR project, and one wonders how this may have affected participating teachers and why parents whose children were in other types of classes did not then demand that their children be reassigned to small classes. Finally, the STAR schools had volunteered to participate, suggesting that the teachers and principals in those schools may have had strong interests in trying innovative ideas. Questions such as these should not cause us to reject the findings from the STAR project, but we should keep in mind that this was a single study and that, as always, other evidence is needed to increase certainty about class size effects… .

Like Project STAR, the SAGE program (Wisconsin's Student Achievement Guarantee in Education

Program) studied schools that had volunteered for the program and provided them with sufficient funds to hire additional teachers. The SAGE program, however, involved more Hispanic, Asian, and Native American students than had the STAR project.

After the announcement of findings from the initial effort, the Wisconsin legislature extended the SAGE program to other primary schools in the state. Therefore, what began as a small trial project has now blossomed into a statewide program that makes small classes in the early grades available for schools serving needy students.

The California Class Size Reduction Program

In 1996, California began a class size reduction program that has been far more controversial than such programs elsewhere. In earlier years, California had experienced many social problems, and major measures of achievement ranked California schools last in the United States. That year, however, a fiscal windfall became available, and then-governor Pete Wilson announced that primary schools would receive $650 annually for each student (an amount later increased to $800) if they would agree to reduce class sizes in the early grades from the statewide average of more than 28 students to not more than 20 students in each class (Hymon, 1997; Korostoff, 1998; Stecher, Bohrnstedt, Kirst, McRobbie, & Williams, 2001).

Several problems quickly surfaced. First, the California definition of a small class was larger than the size recommended in other studies. In fact, the size of small classes in California matched the size of standard classes in some other states. On the other hand, some California schools had been coping with 30–40 students in each classroom in the early grades, so a reduction to 20 students constituted an improvement.

The second problem was that the program's per-student funding was inadequate. Contrast the SAGE program's additional $2,000 for each student with the $650 or $800 offered by California. Nevertheless, the lure of additional funding proved seductive, and most California school districts applied to participate. This inadequate funding imposed serious consequences on poorer school districts, which had to abolish other needed activities to afford hiring teachers for smaller classes. In effect, then, the program created rather than solved problems for underfunded school districts.

In addition, when the California program began, many of its primary schools were overcrowded, and the state was suffering from a shortage of well-trained, certificated teachers. To cope with the lack of space, some schools created spaces for smaller classes by cannibalizing other needed facilities such as special education quarters, child care centers, music and art rooms, computer laboratories, libraries, gymnasiums, or teachers' lounges. Other schools had to tap into their operating budgets to buy portable classrooms, resulting in delays in paying for badly needed curricular materials or repairs for deteriorating school buildings. And to staff their smaller classes, many schools had to hire teachers without certification or prior training.

So far, results from the California program have been only modest. Informal evidence suggests that most students, parents, and teachers are pleased with their schools' smaller classes. And comparisons between the measured achievements of 3rd grade students from districts that did and did not participate in the early phases

of the program have indicated minor advantages for California's smaller classes. These effects, however, have been smaller than those reported for the STAR and SAGE programs.

In many ways, the California initiative has provided a near-textbook case of how a state should *not* reduce class size. After failing to conduct a trial program, California adopted an inadequate definition of class size, committed insufficient funds to the initiative, and ignored serious problems of overcrowding and teacher shortages. This example should remind us that small classes are not a panacea for education. To be effective, programs for reducing class size need careful planning and consideration of the needs and strengths of existing school systems.

What We Now Know About Small Classes

What should we conclude about the effects of small classes? Although the results of individual studies are always questionable, a host of different studies suggest several conclusions.

- When planned thoughtfully and funded adequately, small classes in the early grades generate substantial gains for students, and those extra gains are greater the longer students are exposed to those classes.
- Extra gains from small classes in the early grades are larger when the class has fewer than 20 students.
- Extra gains from small classes in the early grades occur in a variety of academic disciplines and for both traditional measures of student achievement and other indicators of student success.
- Students whose classes are small in the early grades retain their gains in standard size classrooms and in the upper grades, middle school, and high school.
- All types of students gain from small classes in the early grades, but gains are greater for students who have traditionally been disadvantaged in education.
- Initial results indicate that students who have traditionally been disadvantaged in education carry greater small-class, early-grade gains forward into the upper grades and beyond.
- The extra gains associated with small classes in the early grades seem to apply equally to boys and girls.
- Evidence for the possible advantages of small classes in the upper grades and high school is inconclusive.

Tentative Theories

Why should reducing class size have such impressive effects in the early grades? Theories about this phenomenon have fallen largely into two camps.

Most theorists focus on the teacher, reasoning that small classes work their magic because the small class context improves interactions between the teacher and individual students. In the early grades, students first learn the rules of standard classroom culture and form ideas about whether they can cope with education. Many students have difficulty with these tasks, and interactions with a teacher on a one-to-one basis—a process more likely to take place when the class is small—help the students cope. In addition, teachers in small classes have higher morale, which enables them to provide a more supportive environment for initial student learning. Learning how to cope well with school is crucial to success in education, and those students who solve this task when young will thereafter carry broad advantages—more effective habits and positive self-concepts—that serve them well in later years of education and work.

The need to master this task confronts all students, but doing so is often a more daunting challenge for students who come from impoverished homes, ethnic groups that have suffered from discrimination or are unfamiliar with U.S. classroom culture, or urban communities where home and community problems interfere with education. Thus, students from such backgrounds have traditionally had more difficulty coping with classroom education, and they are more likely to be helped by a reduction in class size.

This theory also helps explain why reductions in class size in the upper grades may not generate significant advantages. Older students normally have learned to cope with standard classrooms and have developed either effective or ineffective attitudes concerning academic subjects—and these attitudes are not likely to change just because of a reduction in class size.

The theory also suggests a caution. Students are likely to learn more and develop better attitudes toward education if they are exposed to well-trained and enthusiastic teachers, appropriate and challenging curriculums, and physical environments in their classrooms and schools that support learning. If conditions such as these are not also present, then reducing class size in the early grades will presumably have little impact. Thus, when planning programs for reducing class size, we should also think about the professional development of the teachers who will participate in them and the educational and physical contexts in which those programs will be placed.

A second group of theories designed to account for a class size effect focuses on the classroom environment and student conduct rather than on the teacher. We know that discipline and classroom management problems interfere with subject-matter instruction. Theories in this group argue that these problems are less evident in small classes and that students in small classes are more likely to be engaged in learning. Moreover, teacher stress is reduced in small classes, so teachers in the small class context can provide more support for student learning. Studies have also found that small instructional groups can provide an environment for learning that is quite different from that of the large classroom. Small instructional groups can create

supportive contexts where learning is less competitive and students are encouraged to form supportive relationships with one another.

Theories such as these suggest that the small class environment is structurally different from that of the large class. Less time is spent on management and more time is spent on instruction, students participate at higher levels, teachers are able to provide more support for learning, and students have more positive relationships. Such processes should lead both to greater subject-matter learning and to more positive attitudes about education among students, with more substantial effects in the early grades and for those groups that are traditionally disadvantaged in education.

These two theories are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, both may provide partial insights into what happens in small classes and why small class environments help so many students. Collecting other types of evidence to assess such theories directly would be useful, particularly observational studies that compare the details of interaction in early-grade classes of various sizes and surveys of the attitudes and self-concepts of students who have been exposed to classes of different sizes. Unfortunately, good studies of these effects have been hard to find.

Policy Implications and Actions

Given the strength of findings from research on small classes, why haven't those findings provoked more reform efforts? Although many state legislatures have debated or begun reform initiatives related to class size, most primary schools in the United States today do not operate under policies that mandate small classes for early grades. Why not?

This lack of attention has several causes, among them ignorance about the issue, confusion about the results of class size research and ineffective dissemination of those results, prejudices against poor and minority students, the politicizing of debates about class size effects and their implications, and practical problems associated with adopting small classes.

Recent debates about class size have become quite partisan in the United States, with Democrats generally favoring class size reductions and Republicans remaining hostile to them. Responding to President Bill Clinton's 1998 State of the Union address, the U.S. Congress set up a modest program, aimed at urban school districts with high concentrations of poverty, which provided funds for hiring additional teachers during the 1999 and 2000 fiscal years. This program enabled some districts to reduce class sizes in the early grades, and informal results from those cities indicated gains in student achievement.

Republicans have been lukewarm about extending this program—some apparently believing that it is ineffective or is merely a scheme to enhance the coffers of teacher's unions—and have welcomed President George W. Bush's call for an alternative federal program focused on high-stakes achievement tests and using results from those tests to apply sanctions to schools if they do not perform adequately.

The major problems standing in the way of reducing class sizes, however, are often practical ones. In many cases, cutting class sizes means hiring more teachers. With the looming shortage of qualified teachers, recruiting more teachers may be even more difficult than finding the funds to pay their salaries. Further, many schools would have to find or create extra rooms to house the additional classes created by small class programs, which would require either modifying school buildings or acquiring temporary classroom structures.

In many cases, meeting such needs would mean increasing the size of public school budgets, a step abhorred by fiscal conservatives and those who are critical of public education. The latter have argued that other reforms would cost less and be more effective than reducing class sizes. In response to such claims, various studies have estimated the costs of class size reduction programs or compared their estimated costs with those of other proposed reforms. Unfortunately, studies of this type must make questionable assumptions, so the results of their efforts have not been persuasive.

Nevertheless, reducing the size of classes for students in the early grades often requires additional funds. All students would reap sizable education benefits and long-lasting advantages, however, and students from educationally disadvantaged groups would benefit even more. Indeed, if we are to judge by available evidence, no other education reform has yet been studied that would provide such striking benefits. Debates about reducing class sizes, then, are disputes about values. If citizens are truly committed to providing a quality

public education and a level playing field for all students regardless of background, they will find the funds needed to reduce class size.

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READING 9

How to Avoid Statistical Traps

Gerald W. Bracey

> How to Lie With Statistics *and* Damned Lies and Statistics *are two books that point out the complications in interpreting the meaning of statistics. Data do not always support the conclusions drawn in research and reports, yet parents, educators, and policy makers rely on statistics to make sense of the educational scene and trends. Statistics are an essential part of quantitative methods because they are used to summarize data collected to test theories and to determine if the data collected from a sample are representative of the larger population that one would like to generalize to. Thus, as Bracey illustrates, knowing how to interpret statistics is crucial for understanding research on schools.*

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What role do statistics play in helping researchers understand educational systems?
2. Why is it important to have more than one statistical result in drawing conclusions about educational issues?
3. What does Bracey recommend we do to ensure more accuracy in research results?

"There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." This quote from Benjamin Disraeli, prime minister of England under Queen Victoria, demonstrates that the field of statistics has needed to defend its honor since its inception in Europe centuries ago.

From "How to Avoid Statistical Traps," by G. W. Bracey, *Educational Leadership, 63*(8), pp. 78–82. Copyright 2006 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Reprinted with permission.

The original term for statistics, *political arithmetic* (Best, 2001), might be more accurate. Statistics are rarely neutral. Those who collect them have a purpose—sometimes benign, sometimes not—and translate the information to serve that purpose. For example, some people, including representatives of the pharmaceutical industry, say that statistics reveal an "obesity crisis" in the United States. Other people, including some financed by the food industry, allege that the "obesity crisis" is a false alarm spread by drug companies that want the standards for diseases constantly made stricter so that they can define more people as patients and sell them expensive drugs. It's true that the numbers accepted as indications of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and high blood sugar have all become much lower in the last decade.

Contradictory claims like these may be one reason why people say that you can prove anything with statistics. You can't, but people will certainly try to prove their particular viewpoints by using only those numbers that serve their purposes.

More Than One Number

You need more than one statistic to get a full picture of just about anything. Educators whose performance is being judged solely by annual standardized test scores will appreciate this point.

As I was writing this, an article in *The New York Times* gave three statistics for various nations' greenhouse gas emissions: total emissions, per capita emissions, and emissions per industrial output (Barringer, 2006). Using total emissions, the United States is number one by far, with China second and Russia third. Using per capita emissions, the United States is still number one and Russia is still third, but Canada is second. (China has lots of people and is still largely a rural nation despite its rapid urbanization.) Using industrial output, Russia is first, China second, and the United States fifth. (Russian and Chinese industries are not as clean as U.S. industries.)

Which statistic is best? All of them together. Using only one would be like evaluating a center fielder only on his batting average or a quarterback only on yards gained per pass. You need more than one statistic to paint a complete picture.

Similarly, a recent e-mailer asked me whether a preschool program, which produced a four-month gain in vocabulary and math and cost $6,000 per kid per year, was worth it. I said that I couldn't tell. For one thing, the program likely produced health, socialization, and other outcomes besides the two mentioned. In addition, the real value of the program might not be clear for years: It took long-term evaluations of the outcomes of the Perry Preschool Project and the Chicago Family Centers project to establish that society gained about $7 for every dollar invested in these programs (Berrueta-Clement, Schweinhart, Barnett, Epstein, & Weikart, 1984; Reynolds, 2001).

Principles of Data Interpretation

Despite the limitations of individual statistics and public cynicism about being able to prove anything, people remain remarkably trusting when it comes to statistics. Best (2001) observes that "Most of the time, most people simply accept statistics without question" (p. 4). This acceptance would be dangerous at any time, but given today's polarized politicization of education (and virtually everything else), it is particularly hazardous now. Educators can avoid this danger by following some basic principles of data interpretation.

Go Back to the Data

Many people call the National Commission on Excellence in Education's 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* "the paper *Sputnik*" because it focused attention on education in the same way *Sputnik* did in 1954. Some still refer to it today as a "landmark" study. It's a landmark, all right: a golden treasury of selected, spun, distorted, and even manufactured statistics.

After opening with a blast of Cold-Warrior rhetoric, the good commissioners listed 13 indicators of the "risk," all referring to test scores. For example, "Over half the population of gifted students do not match their tested ability with comparable achievement in school." Given that achievement tests at the time were the principal means of selecting kids for gifted and talented programs, how could this possibly be true? When I sought an answer from some commissioners and their staff members, no one could remember where this statistic came from. How convenient.

Another statistic was, "Average tested achievement of students graduating from college is also lower." The United States has no program to test students graduating from college that would yield a statistic showing their "average tested achievement." What on earth could this mean? These examples illustrate a vital principle of data interpretation: If you find a statement the least bit suspect, ask to see the raw data.

Beware of Selectivity

Some of the other indicators in *A Nation at Risk* illustrate perhaps the most common misuse of statistics: selecting a statistic that, although accurate in itself, paints an incomplete and misleading picture. For instance, the report claimed that "there was a steady decline in science achievement scores of U.S. 17-year-olds as measured by national assessments in 1969, 1973, and 1977." This was true.

But the statement refers only to science, and only to 17-year-olds. What about the 9- and 13-year-olds also tested in national assessments? No "steady decline" in science for them. What about math? What about reading? No hint of any decline in either subject for any of the three age groups (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2000).

The commissioners had nine trend lines available from NCES data (three ages times three subjects). Only one could be used to support crisis rhetoric, and that was the only one the commissioners mentioned.

Compare Rhetoric With the Numbers

Perhaps the most dangerous statistic is the one that Joel Best calls the *mutant* statistic. This statistic begins life as a legitimate datum, but mutates into something new and wrong. Best (2001) gives the example of the claim, widely circulated, that 150,000 women die in the United States each year from anorexia. The U.S. Census Bureau's *Statistical Abstract of the United States* shows that 55,000 women ages 15–44 die each year of all causes. Even if anorexia had killed all 55,000, given that anorexia mostly affects young women, it is unlikely that we can find another 95,000 anorexia victims younger than 15 and older than 44. In fact, the proper statistic is that 150,000 women *suffer* from anorexia—and even this number is probably a bit inflated because it was produced by an activist group attempting to call attention to the problem.

Mutant statistics afflict education data as well. *Washington Post* pundit George Will wrote in one column that almost half of Chicago's public school teachers sent their own children to private schools (Will, 1993a). This was true. The figure was 43 percent at the time, and that was the highest proportion in the United States. (Religion figured strongly in the Chicago teachers' decisions.) But over a period of six months, Will's neurons replaced "Chicago" with "the nation"; in another column, he wrote, "Nationally about half of urban public school teachers with school-age children send their children to private schools" (Will, 1993b). This was not true. According to data from the 2000 census, 17.5 percent of all urban families and 21.5 percent of urban public school teachers send their children to private schools. The rate ranges from 43.8 percent of teachers in the Philadelphia/Camden metro area down to 1.7 percent in Oklahoma City. In 21 of these top 50 cities, teachers use private schools less than urban families do (Doyle, DeSchryver, & Diepold, 2004).

Will's brain might have been addled by the work of Denis Doyle, whose reports using data from the 1980, 1990, and 2000 censuses have promoted the idea that public school teachers do send their kids to private schools in larger numbers than the general public does (Doyle, 1995; Doyle, DeSchryver, & Diepold, 2004; Doyle & Hartle, 1986). Doyle refers to teachers as "connoisseurs" of education, implying that if they send their kids to private schools, they must know something that the rest of us don't. He writes,

> With teachers choosing private schools, the truth is self-evident: While they work in public schools, they choose private schools for their own children because they believe they are better. (Doyle, 1995)

This statement creates the impression that all public school teachers in all types of communities use private schools. But if we look beyond the rhetoric to the actual statistics, we find these figures for the United States as a whole (Doyle, 1995; Doyle, DeSchryver, & Diepold, 2004):

	Teachers	*General public*
1990	12.1%	13.1%

2000	10.6%	12.1%

The numbers show that teachers made less use of private schools than the general public did. What's more, despite all the lionization of private schools and the demonization of public schools during the 1990s, a smaller proportion of both teachers and the general public had children in private schools in 2000 than in 1990.

Make Sure That Groups Are Comparable

The statistics on the percentages of children sent to private schools point to another principle of data interpretation: When comparing groups, make sure the groups are comparable. Teachers and the general public are not comparable. Teachers are more likely to have at least a bachelor's degree and less likely to live below the poverty line. We need to consider the implications of these and similar factors before we draw conclusions about the two groups' public school–private school choices.

This principle often comes into play in figuring out the impact of high-stakes graduation tests. In 2004, Massachusetts announced that 96 percent of its seniors had passed the state test and would graduate. This was true, but it was true only for people who had begun the 2003–2004 school year as seniors and who were still in school. Many in the class of 2004 were no longer present and accounted for. When that cohort of students started 9th grade, it contained 78,000 students; by the time it reached 12th grade, there were only 60,000. Eighteen thousand students had decamped (Wheelock, 2004).

We don't know what happened to these students. Some, of course, left the state and might well have passed the test and graduated if they had remained. But others were retained in grade and were no longer in the class of 2004. Some failed and dropped out or sought a General Equivalency Diploma. If we look at how many who started as 9th graders in the class of 2004 eventually graduated, we find rates ranging from 54 percent for Latino students to 80 percent for white students (Wheelock, 2004). We can't draw an accurate conclusion about the effects of high school graduation exams unless we consider all the groups, including those that did not graduate on time.

Know the Difference Between Rates and Scores

The Massachusetts example also illustrates another principle of data interpretation: Be aware of whether you are dealing with rates or scores. The two metrics can paint very different pictures of a situation. These days, most states are reporting some kind of rate: percent passing, percent proficient, or percent meeting state standards. But if we focus only on the proficiency cutoff, it doesn't matter whether the student exceeds it by one question or 40. We're looking at how many kids can jump over the barrier, not at how high they jump.

Moreover, using passing rates instead of scores can obscure the fact that the white-minority achievement gap may be increasing. Consider the theoretical data in Table 9.1. If we look only at passing rates, black students have reduced the gap from 40 percent to 30 percent. But if we look at scores, the gap has actually increased from 16 points to 24 points.

This discrepancy might not be so important if the passing score actually meant something in terms of performance in the real world. But it doesn't. These passing scores are totally arbitrary. Some readers might recall that in my recent report on the condition of public education (Bracey, 2005), I awarded a Golden Apple to a student in Ohio because he refused to take the Ohio Proficiency Tests. It was not his act of defiance that garnered him a prize; it was the reasons he gave:

> In 13 years of testing, Ohio has failed to conduct any studies linking scores on the proficiency test to college acceptance rates, dropout rates, college grades, income levels, incarceration rates, scores on military recruiting tests, or any other similar statistic. [The student was admitted to several colleges.] (p. 140)

Do the Arithmetic

Here's a final principle of data interpretation to examine on your own: Do the arithmetic. In 1995, an article in an education periodical (not *Educational Leadership*) stated that "Every year since 1950, the number of American children gunned down has doubled." Sit down with a calculator and a sheet of paper on which you write in one column the years from 1950 to 1994. Then assume that one child was "gunned down" in 1950 and let the figure double for each successive year. Have fun.

Table 9.1 Pass Rates and Average Scores Tell a Different Story

Pass rate—gap closed by 10 points		
	2004	*2005*
Black students	60%	70%
White students	100%	100%
Gap	40%	30%
Average scores—gap increased by 8 points		
	2004	***2005***
Black students	62%	68%
White students	78%	92%
Gap	16%	24%

These are hypothetical data. Score needed to pass = 60%.

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Projects for Further Exploration

1. As you read the articles in this book, keep a list of the types of research methods used in each, even if a full discussion of the methods is not included in each one. This should sharpen your ability to evaluate information.
2. Skip ahead to Chapter 7 and read "'Rednecks,' 'Rutters,' and 'Rithmetic: Social Class, Masculinity, and Schooling in a Rural Context" by Edward W. Morris to look at an ethnographic study, a different type of qualitative research from the first article in this chapter, which employed open-ended questions directed toward a focus group.
3. Do a library search for "*class size*" (use quotation marks around it) and *achievement* to see if the more recent articles you find correspond to the arguments made in the article by Biddle and Berliner in this chapter.

Chapter 3 Schooling in a Social Context: Educational Environments

With an introduction to theories and methods (Chapters 1 and 2) used to study educational systems, we can now begin our study of actual schools. We start by examining the contexts (environments) that surround schools and affect how schools work. No education system exists in a vacuum. In this chapter, we consider the *environment* as the part of the open systems model (discussed in the Introduction) that influences schools from outside school walls. If schools ignore the environment in which they are located, they do so at their own peril. Results could be loss of financing, accreditation, and community support. To focus only on what happens behind the closed doors of the school or classroom misses the total picture of the educational system. Changing values in society and the community, political and economic constraints, home environments of students and school personnel, business and technology, special-interest groups, and other external influences affect what happens within school walls. In addition, the social context or environment helps to define the purpose, meaning, functions, and limitations of education.

One way to view the environment's impact on schools is to consider the interaction between institutions in society. Each of the readings in this section provides an example of a key institution in society and its interaction with and impact on schools. For example, the political institutions at the federal or national, state, and local levels in each country have varying degrees of influence over school curriculum, financing, and transition from school to work. The first reading considers this political involvement in educational systems and the complex interrelationships between education, politics, family and home environment, religious pressures on schools, and other institutions. John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan discuss the institution of education as it operates in the larger political context. In most countries, control of schools is in the hands of the national political system. The dominant goal of governments is to incorporate students into society by meeting the educational and skill needs of the society. To find schools that are entities independent of or separate from the state is rare. In their classic book from which the first reading in this chapter comes, Meyer and Rowan discuss the United States, a country that allows a degree of local control, "decoupling" schools from some external federal political and environmental pressures. The authors use the term *decoupling* to describe the discrepancy between what schools do and how schools and their environments evaluate the outcomes. In practice, U.S. schools are organized to meet different internal and external pressures. Decoupling serves the purpose of protecting local schools from too much external scrutiny, resulting in more autonomy at the local level and little evidence of ineffectiveness, conflict, or inconsistency. Furthermore, decoupling occurs with the tacit agreement of all players, from the community to school personnel. Because schools cannot ignore important aspects of their environments, especially those that are necessary for support and even survival, we consider several environmental factors and how they can influence educational settings: the participants in schools, the public, families, technology, governments, religion, and other institutions. Each of *the participants* in a school brings values, beliefs, attitudes, abilities, and behaviors into the school. Add home dynamics (including what each participant had for breakfast!), and we have a picture of some of the environmental complexities brought by participants that affect schools. For example, students are

processed in the school system. They are required to attend school to learn skills and knowledge that are necessary for success in the world outside school. Teachers and administrative staff members are also participants. Participants bring in unique characteristics. They differ in age and educational background, and they can differ in social class background, factors that can add complexity to school interactions.

In addition, *the public* holds attitudes on school policies, curriculum, and funding. Attitudes reflect opinions of the parents who send their children to school, of community members who pay taxes to support schools, and of many political and religious interest groups that express their feelings about school policies. The significance of public opinion is that school policies and support for schools often reflect attitudes of the community. Each year a survey of the public's attitudes toward public schools is conducted and reported in *Phi Delta Kappan* magazine. The 2016 responses to the survey indicate that the public sees "preparing students academically" as the main goal of public education (45%), with "preparing students to be good citizens" (26%) and "preparing students for work" (25%) following. Seventy percent of those who support increased property taxes at the local level felt the higher taxes would help schools improve, whereas 35% of those who support increased taxes were not confident this would help improve schools (PDK Poll, 2016). Over the past several years, the survey found that the public's concerns centered around lack of financial support of schools, lack of discipline, overcrowded schools, lack of parental support, testing regulations, fighting, difficulty getting good teachers, and use of drugs (Bushaw & Lopez, 2013, p. 20). The point is that public attitudes toward schools influence support given schools, especially funding through local property taxes and levies. *Parents* and *family* have direct interest in what their children are learning, and parents can be quite vocal about agendas for their children's schooling. Some schools require parental participation for students to attend, and many educational policy makers point out the value of parental involvement in and outside of school. However, how, when, and why parents are involved is important in determining the impact involvement will have on individual children's achievement (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007).

One example of an area of research for sociologists of education has been the effects of parental involvement in after-school and summer experiences of children and how these are related to student achievement. Students with higher socioeconomic status tend to have experiences that enhance their academic performance. Music lessons, sports lessons, camps, or visits to museums influence their achievement (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Bennett, Litz, & Jayaram, 2012; Epstein, 1987, 1988).

Children who come from poor families start out with a strike against them in their efforts to achieve in school. In the second article, Pedro A. Noguera discusses the problems faced by children raised in poverty and presents an approach that can break the cycle of poverty and improve the children's learning environment.

Technology also affects what students and teachers bring into the school setting as well as what the schools teach students. Most studies of computer access and school achievement confirm that technology improves student achievement (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2010). Yet keeping up to date with technology is a challenge for budget-strapped schools, and families, and busy teachers. Almost all schools have Internet access, but the use of computers differs by the socioeconomic composition of schools (Purcell, Heaps, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013). The digital divide reflects the community socioeconomic differences

(Attewell, 2001).

Because all *institutions* in society are interrelated, influence and pressure on schools often come from all other institutions in the educational environment. *Federal, state, and local government institutions* play a major role in the educational environment and in policy decisions, in part because the money they provide to schools is essential to operations. In the Race to the Top policies of the Obama administration, expectations were laid out for schools and districts, such as the requirement that school children pass proficiency tests; failure to do so places a red failing mark on the school district. These practices can disadvantage schools with high numbers of children living in poverty, especially immigrants and refugees (Winerip, 2010). The new Trump administration will propose its own plan.

The funding for schools is based on federal, state, and local government economic mandates, discussed in the next reading by Alana Semuels. While federal funding is generally between 8% and 12%, and state funding averages 44% in the United States, local funding depends on the wealth in school districts, resulting in inequality between districts. U.S. courts have ruled on inequality and the debate continues.

The last reading in this section on the school environment focuses on the influence of the family—and parents, in particular—and how family class background can influence a student's success in school and in future life. This article focuses on the institutions of family and family economic status as they relate to education. Jessica McCrory Calarco uses qualitative methods, including observation and interviews, to analyze the role working-class and middle-class parents play in their children's school behaviors and successes. She finds that these behaviors play a significant role in student achievement and "reproduction of social class."

The importance of any particular part of the environment changes over time. For example, when the school needs to pass a levy to obtain operating funds, the voters become a highly salient community. When school administrators face pressure from teachers' unions at contract time, their negotiations take on high salience. At other times, voters or unions take a secondary position in importance compared with other pressing issues in the environment at the time.

The readings in this chapter present examples of environmental influences and constraints on what happens in schools and classrooms and how the environment affects educational achievement. The bottom line is whether schools are preparing children to be productive members of society, a question that we discuss throughout this book and that is much debated among experts, researchers, and the various public constituencies of schools.

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READING 10

The Structure of Educational Organizations

John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan

To begin our exploration of the social context of educational systems, John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan present a macro-level interpretation of the school in modern society. Schools serve individual, family, and societal needs, and in many societies they are controlled by centralized political authorities. By preparing youth for positions in the social class and economic stratification systems, educational bureaucracies serve the societies in which they are located. Educational systems prepare and credential individuals for participation in society, especially postindustrial corporate information society. By meeting the expectations of external political and corporate organizations, schools gain legitimacy and resources to carry out their missions and to be innovative. Whereas educational systems and authority in most societies are centralized, the U.S. system is decentralized, with controls at the local and state levels. This means that educators are less secure in their positions because they are beholden to sometimes-conflicting local interests.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How do schools serve the needs of the political and corporate sectors of society?
2. What theoretical approach or approaches relate most closely to the ideas in this reading?
3. How does credentialing link schools to other institutions in society, such as family and the economy?

The Organization of Schooling: Another Interpretation

The explanation developed here begins with the context in which educational organizations are presently found. Modern education today takes place in large-scale, public bureaucracies. The rise of this kind of educational system is closely related to the worldwide trend of national development. The first step in our argument, therefore, is to relate national development to the organization of education.

From *The Structure of Educational Organizations: Environments and Organizations* (pp. 217–221), by J. Meyer and B. Rowan, New York: John Wiley & Sons. Copyright 1978 by John Wiley & Sons. Reprinted with permission.

The Growth of Corporate Schooling

[W]e know that bureaucratic schooling has not arisen from a need to coordinate and standardize instruction, for this is precisely what modern American educational organizations do not do. Nor do these bureaucratic organizations merely fund and administer an exchange between educational professionals and families needing educational services. Educational bureaucracies present themselves not as units servicing education but as organizations that embody educational purposes in their collective structure. A theory of their emergence and dominance should explain why these bureaucracies assume jurisdiction over educational instruction. The most plausible explanation is that modern schools produce education for society, not for individuals or families. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, national societies everywhere took over the function of defining and managing the socialization of their citizen personnel (Coombs, 1968; Meyer & Rubinson, 1975; Ramirez, 1974). In national societies, education is both a right and duty of citizenship (Bendix, 1964). It also becomes an important way of gaining status and respect (for example, see Blau & Duncan, 1967). For reasons that do not require elaborate discussion here, education becomes the central agency defining personnel—both citizen and elite—for the modern state and economy.

Since World War II, the trend toward corporate control of education has intensified. As nation-states have consolidated their control over a growing number of elements of social life, they have established educational systems to incorporate citizens into the political, economic, and status order of society. This incorporation is managed by a large public bureaucracy that uniformly extends its standardization and authority through all localities. Thus, educational organizations have come to be increasingly structured by centers of political authority (Meyer & Rubinson, 1975). Bailyn (1960), Field (1972), Katz (1968), and Tyack (1974) describe the steps of this process in pre-twentieth-century American history. First local, and later national, elites became concerned with the social control of peripheral citizen groups—who need control precisely because they are citizens. At first, the rural New Englanders who escaped from the control of clergy and town community (Bailyn, 1960), then the Irish immigrants (Field, 1972; Katz, 1968), and finally the great waves of nineteenth century immigration (Tyack, 1974) created the pressures to control, standardize, and coordinate the educational system. As these steps progressed, the impetus to organize schooling on a large scale—to certify and classify pupils, to certify teachers, to accredit schools, and to control formal curriculum—gained force.

The growth of corporate control of education has major implications for educational organizations. As citizen personnel are increasingly sorted and allocated to positions in the social structure on the basis of classified or certified educational properties, the ritual classifications of education—type of student, topic, teacher, or school—come to have substantial value in what might be called the societal identity "market." A workable identity market presupposes a standardized, trustworthy currency of social typifications that is free from local anomalies. Uniform categories of instruction are therefore developed, and there is a detailed elaboration of the standardized and certified properties comprising an educational identity.

The result of this social expansion of education is a basic change in social structure. Education comes to consist, not of a series of private arrangements between teachers and students, but rather of a set of standardized public credentials used to incorporate citizen personnel into society. Society and its stratification system come to be composed of a series of typifications having educational meaning—ordinary citizens are presumed to have basic literacy. Strata above ordinary citizens are composed of high school and college graduates. The upper levels contain credentialed professionals, such as doctors and lawyers.

Thus, as societies and nation-states use education to define their basic categories of personnel, a large-scale educational bureaucracy emerges to standardize and manage the production of these categories. The credentials that give individuals status and membership in the wider collectivity must come under collective control. Such collective control would not be necessary if instruction were conceived of as a merely private matter between individuals and teachers. But, as educational organizations emerge as the credentialing agency of modern society and as modern citizens see their educational and corporate identities linked—that is, as education becomes the theory of personnel in modern society—it is consequently standardized and controlled.

Society thus becomes "schooled" (Illich, 1971). Education comes to be understood by corporate actors according to the schooling rule: Education is a certified teacher teaching a standardized curricular topic to a registered student in an accredited school. The nature of schooling is thus socially defined by reference to a set of standardized categories the legitimacy of which is publicly shared. As the categories and credentials of schooling gain importance in allocation and membership processes, the public comes to expect that they will be controlled and standardized. The large-scale public bureaucracy created to achieve this standardization is now normatively constrained by the expectations of the schooling rule. To a large degree, then, education is coordinated by shared social understandings that define the roles, topics, and contents of educational organizations.

The Organizational Management of Standardized Classifications

The political consolidation of society and the importance of education for the allocation of people to positions in the economic and stratification system explain the rise of large-scale educational bureaucracies. These processes also explain why educational organizations focus so tightly on the ritual classifications of education. Educational organizations are created to produce schooling for corporate society. They create standard types of graduates from standard categories of pupils using standard types of teachers and topics. As their purposes and structures are defined and institutionalized in the rules, norms, and ideologies of the wider society, the legitimacy of schools and their ability to mobilize resources depend on maintaining congruence between their

structure and these socially shared categorical understandings of education (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Parsons, 1956).

Consider this matter from the viewpoint of any rational college president or school superintendent. The whole school will dissolve in conflict and illegitimacy if the internal and external understanding of its accredited status is in doubt: If it has too few Ph.D.s or properly credentialed teachers on its faculty, it may face reputational, accreditational, or even legal problems. If it has one too many "economics" courses and one too few "history" courses (leave aside their actual content), similar disasters may occur as the school falls short of externally imposed accrediting standards. No matter what they have learned, graduates may have difficulty finding jobs. No matter what the school teaches, it may not be capable of recruiting funds or teachers. Thus, the creation of institutionalized rules defining and standardizing education creates a system in which schools come to be somewhat at the mercy of the ritual classifications. Failure to incorporate certified personnel or to organize instruction around the topics outlined in accreditation rules can bring conflict and illegitimacy.

At the same time, the creation of institutionalized rules provides educational organizations with enormous resources. First, the credentials, classifications, and categories of schooling constitute a language that facilitates exchange between school and society. Social agencies often provide local schools with "categorical funding" to support the instruction of culturally disadvantaged or educationally handicapped students or to support programs in bilingual or vocational education. Second, schools can exploit the system of credentials and classifications in order to gain prestige. They can carefully attend to the social evaluations of worth given to particular ritual classifications and can maximize their honorific worth by hiring prestigious faculty, by incorporating programs that are publicly defined as "innovative," or by upgrading their status from junior college to four-year college. Finally, the school relies on the ritual classifications to provide order. Social actors derive their identities from the socially defined categories of education and become committed to upholding these identities within the context of their school activities. To the degree that actors take on the obligation to be [a part of the system] (Goffman, 1967), the whole educational system retains its plausibility.

In modern society, then, educational organizations have good reason to tightly control properties defined by the wider social order. By incorporating externally defined types of instruction, teachers, and students into their formal structure, schools avoid illegitimacy and discreditation. At the same time, they gain important benefits. In schools using socially agreed-on classifications, participants become committed to the organization. This is especially true when these classifications have high prestige (McCall & Simmons, 1966). And, by labeling students or instructional programs so that they conform to institutionally supported programs, schools obtain financial resources. In short, the rewards for attending to external understandings are an increased ability to mobilize societal resources for organizational purposes.

The Avoidance of Evaluation and Inspection

We have explained why schools attend to ritual classifications, but we have not explained why they do not attend (as organizations) to instruction. There are two [primary] ways that instructional activities can be controlled in modern education bureaucracies. First, many of the properties of educational identities may be certified in terms of examinations. Second, many of the ritual classifications involve a reorganization of

educational activity, and some school systems organize an inspection system to make sure these implications are carried through. Thus, two basic kinds of instructional controls are available to educational organizations —the certification of status by testing, and/or the inspection of instructional activity to ensure conformity to rules.

Our explanation of the loose control of instruction in U.S. school systems must in part focus on specific features of U.S. society, since most other societies have educational bureaucracies that assignment to a classification such as student, graduate, or teacher is determined by various tests, most often controlled by national ministries of education. Also, national inspectors are often employed to attempt to make sure that teachers and schools conform to national standards of practice, regardless of the educational outcome. Thus, in most societies the state, through a ministry of education, controls systems of inspection or examination that manage the ritual categories of education by controlling either output or instructional procedure (Ramirez, 1974; Rubinson, 1974).

In American society, tests are used in profusion. However, most of these tests are neither national nor organizational but, rather, are devices of the individual teacher. The results seldom leave the classroom and are rarely used to measure instructional output. In the United States, the most common national tests that attempt to standardize local output differences—the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)—are creatures of private organization. Further, only the New York State Board of Regents examination approximates (and at that in a pale way) an attempt to standardize curriculum throughout a political unit by using an examination system.

The apparent explanation for this lack of central control of instruction in American education is the decentralization of the system. Schools are in large part locally controlled and locally funded. While higher levels of authority in state and federal bureaucracies have made many attempts to impose evaluative standards on the educational system, the pressures of continued localism defeat them; category systems that delegate certification or evaluation rights to the schools themselves are retained. The reason for this is clear. A national evaluation system would define almost all the children in some communities as successes and almost all those in others as failures. This could work in a nationally controlled system, but it is much too dangerous in a system that depends on legitimating itself in and obtaining resources from local populations. Why, for instance, should the state of Mississippi join in a national credentialing system that might define a great proportion of its schools and graduates as failures? It is safer to adapt the substantive standards of what constitutes, say, a high school graduate to local circumstances and to specify in state laws only categories at some remove from substantive competence.

There is yet another way in which the institutional pattern of localism reduces organizational controls over instruction. In the United States, the legitimacy of local control in some measure deprofessionalizes school administrators at all levels (in contrast to European models). They do not carry with them the authority of the central, national, professional, and bureaucratic structures and the elaborate ideological backing such authority brings with it. American administrators must compromise and must further lose purely professional authority by acknowledging their compromised role. They do not have tenure, and their survival is dependent on

laypersons in the community, not professionals. Their educational authority of office is, therefore, lower than that of their European counterparts, especially in areas dealing with central educational matters such as instruction and curriculum. This situation is precisely analogous to the "red" versus "expert" conflict found in many organizations in communist societies, where organizational managers must often act contrary to their expert opinion in order to follow the party line. The profusion of local pressures in American society turns school administrators into "reds" as it were …

Overview of the Argument

With the growth of corporate society, especially the growth of nation-states, education comes into exchange with society. Schooling—the bureaucratic standardization of ritual classifications—emerges and becomes the dominant form of educational organization. Schools become organized in relation to these ritual categories in order to gain support and legitimacy. In America, the local and pluralistic control of schools causes these classifications to have little impact on the actual instructional activities of local schools. Thus the official classifications of education, although enforced in public respects, are decoupled from actual activity and can contain a good deal of internal inconsistency without harm. As a result, American schools in practice contain multiple realities, each organized with respect to different internal or exogenous pressures. These multiple realities conflict so little because they are buffered from each other by the logic of confidence that runs through the system.

In this fashion, educational organizations have enjoyed enormous success and have managed to satisfy an extraordinary range of external and internal constituents. The standardized categories of American society and its stratification system are maintained, while the practical desires of local community constituents and the wishes of teachers, who are highly satisfied with their jobs, are also catered to. As new constituents rise up and make new demands, these pressures can be accommodated within certain parts of the system with minimal impact on other parts. A great deal of adaptation and change can occur without disrupting actual activity. And, conversely, the activities of teachers and pupils can change a good deal, even though the abstract categories have remained constant.

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READING 11

A Broader and Bolder Approach Uses Education to Break the Cycle of Poverty

Pedro A. Noguera

The social environment including the neighborhood and family that is the background for some children is not conducive to learning. So argues Pedro A. Noguera. While some school policy makers base policy on the idea that every child can learn and should be encouraged to learn regardless of circumstances, others including Noguera argue that poverty and related social conditions affect children's ability to learn. Middle-class children are more likely to receive external academic and social support from parents and communities. Where poverty is endemic and children face issues of poor health, safety, and lack of parental support, learning is more difficult.

Noguera describes a reform plan called Broader, Bolder Approach (BBA) that is directed at some of the issues of concern for children growing up in poverty. A guiding principle behind the reforms is that the community and schools must work together to meet student needs.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why is it not enough to say that "all children can learn"?
2. What are three factors that affect the learning of children in poverty?
3. How does the Broader, Bolder Approach propose to provide educational opportunity for children in poverty?

Recognizing that poverty has a profound influence on academic outcomes is not a new idea. In fact, a large body of research over several decades has shown that poor children face enormous education challenges specifically related to poverty (Coleman et al., 1966; Rothstein, 2004). However, recently it's become fashionable for policy makers and reformers to criticize anyone who points to poverty as an obstacle to learning and higher achievement. Loudly proclaiming "no excuses," these reformers claim that large numbers of ineffective classroom teachers, not poverty, are the real obstacles to improving academic outcomes for poor children. While it is absolutely the case that poor children need dedicated, passionate, and effective teachers and principals to be successful, there is no evidence that even the best schools can overcome the effects of poverty on their own. However, a growing number of "reformers" steadfastly make this assertion, and these individuals have enormous influence over education policy.

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In an op-ed piece in *The Washington Post* last year [2010], Joel Klein, former New York City Schools chancellor, Michael Lomax, chief executive of the United Negro College Fund, and Janet Murguía, president

and chief executive of the National Council of La Raza, wrote:

> In the debate over how to fix American public education, many believe that schools alone cannot overcome the impact that economic disadvantage has on a child, that life outcomes are fixed by poverty and family circumstances, and that education doesn't work until other problems are solved. This theory is, in some ways, comforting for educators.
>
> After all, if schools make only a marginal difference, we can stop faulting ourselves for failing to make them work well for millions of children… . Problem is, the theory is wrong. It's hard to know how wrong—because we haven't yet tried to make the changes that would tell us—but plenty of evidence demonstrates that schools can make an enormous difference despite the challenges presented by poverty and family background. (Klein, Lomax, & Murguía, 2010)

While it might seem encouraging for education and civil rights leaders to assert that poverty isn't an obstacle to higher student achievement, the evidence does not support such claims. Over 50 years, numerous studies have documented how poverty and related social conditions (e.g., lack of access to health care, early childhood education, stable housing, etc.) affect child development and student achievement. The research never suggests that poor children are incapable of learning or that poverty itself should be regarded as a learning disability. Rather, research suggests that poor children encounter obstacles that often adversely affect their development and learning outcomes. To ignore this reality and make bold assertions that all children can achieve while doing nothing to address the outside-of-school challenges they face is neither fair nor a sound basis for developing public policy.

Despite compelling evidence that education policy must devise ways to at least mitigate the harmful effects of poverty on student achievement and child development, most state and federal policies have failed to do so. However, there is growing awareness among a number of educators, mayors, and policy advocates of the need to do so based on the realization that a great deal can be done to counter the effects of poverty on children's lives and their education.

Poverty Influences Learning

A substantial body of evidence shows that concentrated poverty in urban neighborhoods and the adverse social conditions that typically accompany it affect the performance of students and of schools in at least three important ways.

#1. External support: Academic and social support is less available to students outside of school.

Sociologist James Coleman (1998) coined the term "social closure" to describe the mutually reinforcing partnerships between parents and schools in healthy schools and communities. Coleman found that supportive relationships between parents and teachers promote and strengthen values and norms that positively influence student achievement. He also said such relationships serve as an essential ingredient of school success.

In her research on parents, sociologist Annette Lareau (2003) found that middle-class parents provide their children with a broad assortment of advantages (e.g., access to private tutors, summer enrichment camps, homework support, etc.) that improve the likelihood of academic success, while poor parents were typically less able to provide this type of support. Moreover, in inner-city communities, social closure between parents and schools is generally weak or even nonexistent because racial and class differences contribute to a lack of trust (Noguera, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Instead of working together to benefit children, schools in poor communities frequently experience difficulty in getting parents involved at school and are more likely to experience antagonism and even hostility with the parents they serve, particularly at schools with a long history of poor performance.

#2. Environmental obstacles: Adverse conditions influence students' health, safety, and well-being, which invariably influence learning.

In cities and towns where poverty is concentrated, rates of inter-personal violence tend to be higher, health indicators tend to be more negative, and stress and overall psychological and emotional well-being tends to be substantially worse (Kirp 2011; Noguera 2003). This is due to the lack of services as well as what sociologist William Julius Wilson has described as a "concentration effect" (1987). A substantial body of research has shown that the quality of life and the overall health of children in poor neighborhoods are substantially lower than for middle-class children. Not surprisingly, these conditions influence academic and developmental outcomes (Adelman & Taylor, 1999; Syme, 2004; Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Without the resources to support children or a strategy to protect children from the harmful effects of dangerous and even toxic conditions in their communities (Greenberg & Schneider, 1996), schools can be overwhelmed. Not surprisingly, the inability to respond to the nonacademic needs of their students often compromises the ability of schools to meet the academic needs. For example, several studies on federally funded Head Start programs have shown that the benefits of early childhood education are often undermined when children don't receive ongoing support, both in and outside of school, after they enter kindergarten (RAND, 2007). Similarly, a study on the long-term consequences of infant exposure to substance abuse has shown that such children are

no more likely to experience school failure than nonaffected children from the same neighborhoods; the harmful effects of the environment can be as devastating as early exposure to drugs (RAND, 2007).

#3. Negative social capital: Adverse conditions undermine the ability of parents and schools to influence the character of schools and ensure that they serve their interests.

Adverse environmental conditions in poor communities, such as violence and substance abuse, tend to negatively influence the ability of parents and schools to develop the social capital to draw upon local resources to further student learning and promote healthy development. In middle-class communities, schools often draw on community resources to augment services they either can't afford or simply can't provide. In fact, real estate agents often use the viability and attractiveness of local schools as a selling point to attract homebuyers.

In contrast, schools in high-poverty communities often function in isolation from other community organizations and agencies (churches, social service agencies, recreation centers, etc.), either because school staff lack relationships with these groups or because they perceive the neighborhood as hostile and potentially dangerous. If residents perceive the school as undesirable, residents who can will go out of their way to avoid sending their children there. Sociologist Lois Wacquant (2002) has argued that, in many poor urban areas, public schools become negative assets that actually undermine the well-being of their communities. Even though public schools are often the most stable social institutions in poor neighborhoods (largely because of public funding), when they function poorly because they're overwhelmed by the needs of their students, they may become formidable obstacles to neighborhood improvement and stability (Noguera, 2003).

None of this means poverty is destiny, or that the obstacles are so significant that they can't be overcome. There are many inspiring examples of poor children who manage to overcome obstacles related to poverty to achieve success in life. But these individuals are always the exceptions. More often than not, when the obstacles confronting poor communities are ignored, efforts to help students achieve and schools improve are less effective.

Mitigating the Effects of Poverty

While expecting a single school to counter the effects of poverty on its own is unrealistic, a small but growing number of American schools are finding ways to reduce some of the effects. Mitigation is not the same as solving a problem, but it's nonetheless an important strategy for schools to employ.

In Newark, N.J., for example, the Broader, Bolder Approach (BBA) reform plan is developing a comprehensive school reform strategy. Operating in seven schools in Newark's Central Ward (six kindergarten through 8th-grade schools and one large comprehensive high school), BBA has introduced school-based interventions that are responsive to the issues and challenges. Through these interventions, social services, and a concerted effort to increase civic engagement, BBA is working to ensure that environmental hardships related to poverty don't undermine efforts to transform schools. With funding from the Ford, Victoria, and Prudential foundations, the BBA effort commenced two years before the $100-million donation from Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg came to Newark.

BBA is working to:

- Expand learning opportunities for students through quality early childhood education and by extending the traditional school day;
- Enrich the curriculum through enhanced literacy development in all content areas and greater emphasis on project-based learning; and
- Build critical partnerships that will strengthen the capacity of schools to respond to student needs and enable community interests to come together so parents and their allies can hold schools and their leaders accountable for academic outcomes.

The BBA strategy draws on research that suggests a more comprehensive approach is needed to increase academic outcomes for poor students and to improve schools that serve them (Blaue & Currie, 2006; Comer, 1988; Dryfoos, 1993; Rothstein, 2004; Waldfogel & Lahaie, 2007). The community schools movement, which provides students (and often their families) with access to mental health and other social supports at school sites is but one example of how service organizations have partnered with schools in high-poverty urban areas to address the social needs of children (Dryfoos, Quinn, & Barkin, 2005). In a recent book, David Kirp (2011) cites the full service schools developed by the Children's Aid Society and Communities in Schools as models that have helped schools meet both the academic and nonacademic needs of children. A growing body of research shows that when schools can offer students access to a variety of social services (e.g., licensed social workers or psychologists, nurse practitioners, or dental services), academic and developmental outcomes for children can improve (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Similarly, research shows that extending the school day before and after traditional school hours, as well as requiring students to attend school on Saturdays and lengthening the school year, can have a tremendous impact on achievement (Kirp, 2011). When carried out in tandem, these practices enable schools to meet many of the needs that typically undermine student learning and child development.

School Reform Is Community Reform

Newark has embraced BBA because there is a growing awareness that the city needs new strategies for developing its human capital before it can experience sustained economic and social renaissance. Transforming schools so they're more effective in providing young people in Newark with an education that can make it possible for them to participate fully in the economic rebirth of the city is widely recognized as essential.

Improving Newark schools will enable the city to address many of the social and economic challenges that have prevented residents from experiencing a superior quality of life. Specifically, the BBA strategy aims at combining research-based education strategies with school-based social services, after-school programs, and interventions to increase the capacity of schools to respond to issues that are endemic to the social and environmental context (e.g., the need for health, nutrition, jobs, safety, etc.). The assumption is that such a full-service approach would enable Newark schools to better meet student needs.

The BBA strategy is based on the theory that improving the schools could spur economic development and improve the quality of life for a greater number of residents. Though this proposition has never been tested at such a large scale before, the theory behind BBA is based on the recognition that education is both a *cause* of many of the problems that plague the city and a potential *solution* to those problems.

BBA seeks to transform schools by creating a series of strategic partnerships between schools, businesses, universities, hospitals, local government, and an array of neighborhood-based service organizations. Such partnerships are designed to increase local support for schools and enhance the social capital of students and their families. Policy advocates of civic capacity building have argued that providing schools with substantial increases in external support is the most cost-effective means of delivering the resources and support they need. The theory holds that such support will lead to greater accountability, better functioning schools, and higher levels of student achievement.

A combination of social, economic, and political problems has historically constrained efforts to improve Newark schools. These problems are also at the root of many of the current challenges confronting its residents. Social isolation and economic marginalization (Wilson, 1987) have an enormous influence upon employment opportunities, health and welfare, aspirations and behavior, and the non-cognitive traits typically associated with academic success (Bryk et al., 2010). Experience in Newark (and several other cities) has shown that when education reforms fail to consider how environmental factors influence students and schools, sustainable improvements in student academic outcomes are difficult to achieve (Noguera, 2003; Payne, 2008; Rothstein, 2004). The BBA strategy seeks to mitigate the detrimental effects of the environment by developing the capacity of schools to respond to student needs and by drawing on support and resources from local institutions.

The BBA strategy also seeks to transform how urban public schools typically serve low-income children of color and their families. In many low-income urban communities, complacency, low expectations, disorder, and dysfunction are endemic to the public schools. In such schools, failure has been normalized (Noguera,

2008), and change often seems impossible. In *Getting What We Ask For* (1984), sociologist Charles Payne points out that schools with a track record of failure often rationalize failure as the inevitable consequence of serving impoverished children. Years of failure in Newark schools have had similar effects upon many of its staff. In Newark, the normalization of failure can be seen in high absentee rates of staff, tolerance of student absenteeism and tardiness, and a lack of attention when implementing interventions and programs designed to help students. BBA will attempt to counter these trends by working with parents and community organizations to support schools and hold them accountable… .

Clearly, it is too early to declare victory or to proclaim the BBA strategy an unqualified success. However, it is also clear that the NCLB [No Child Left Behind] strategy of using high-stakes testing to apply pressure on students and schools hasn't worked, and more of the same under a new name (Race to the Top) is unlikely to bring significant improvements in student achievement, if contextual issues like poverty continue to be ignored. American policy makers and reformers must be willing to accept the obvious: School reform efforts can't ignore the effects of poverty on children's lives or on the performance of schools. What we need is a more holistic strategy, one that makes it possible for schools that serve the most disadvantaged children to meet their academic and social needs so that they can overcome a track record of failure. The BBA strategy can't do this by itself. It must be combined with state and federal reforms that promote enriched learning environments, that make it possible to attract and retain excellent teachers, and that create clear criteria for accountability of all stakeholders in the education process—educators, parents, and students.

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READING 12

Good Schools, Rich Schools; Bad Schools, Poor Schools

Why America's Public Schools Are So Unequal

Alana Semuels

How schools are funded is a key environmental issue for local schools. Why? School funding disparities lie at the heart of rich versus poor schools and, in turn, affect the quality of education received by students. In a look at inequality between schools and school districts, Semuels focuses on a major reason for these inequalities; using examples of specific school districts, she points out the dilemmas concerning school funding faced by state and local decision makers. While the U.S. Constitution provides for federal funding in many areas, education is not one of them; it is left to state and local governments. Federal funds make up between 8% and 12% of school funding nationally and support some specific mandates such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Head Start. Local property taxes fund approximately 44% of local schools. State and local governments, largely from taxes, provide over 88% of education funding (www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-explainers/early-ed-prek-12/school-funding). The problem is that school districts are not equal in the amount of property taxes they generate; some are much more affluent than others, a major factor in the amount spent on each student's education. The economic institution is shaky at best and downright unfair at worst when it comes to dealing with local school funding. As a crucial part of the educational environment, understanding school funding can help us understand disparities in school quality, achievement, and meeting student needs, as Semuels explains.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What does Semuels identify as major reasons in the school environment that bring about inequalities between schools?
2. How do school funding models influence inequalities in schools?
3. From this reading, what do you think needs to be done to solve the school environment problems that Semuels identifies? How do your ideas compare with Semuels's conclusions?

[Connecticut] is one of the wealthiest states in the union. But thousands of children here attend schools that are among the worst in the country. While students in higher-income towns such as Greenwich and Darien have easy access to guidance counselors, school psychologists, personal laptops, and up-to-date textbooks, those in high-poverty areas like Bridgeport and New Britain don't. Such districts tend to have more students in need of extra help, and yet they have fewer guidance counselors, tutors, and psychologists, lower-paid teachers, more dilapidated facilities, and bigger class sizes than wealthier districts, according to an ongoing lawsuit. Greenwich spends $6,000 more per pupil per year than Bridgeport does, according to the State Department of Education.

From "Good Schools, Rich Schools; Bad Schools, Poor Schools," by Alana Semuels, *The Atlantic*, August 25,

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The discrepancies occur largely because public school districts in Connecticut, and in much of America, are run by local cities and towns and are funded by local property taxes. High-poverty areas like Bridgeport and New Britain have lower home values and collect less taxes, and so can't raise as much money as a place like Darien or Greenwich, where homes are worth millions of dollars. Plaintiffs in a decade-old lawsuit in Connecticut, which heard closing arguments earlier this month, argue that the state should be required to ameliorate these discrepancies. Filed by a coalition of parents, students, teachers, unions, and other residents in 2005, the lawsuit, *Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF) v. Rell*, will decide whether inequality in school funding violates the state's constitution… .

Connecticut is not the first state to wrestle with the conundrum caused by relying heavily on local property taxes to fund schools; since the 1970s, nearly every state has had litigation over equitable education… . Indeed, the CCJEF lawsuit … is the state's second major lawsuit on equity. The first, in 1977, resulted in the state being required to redistribute some funds among districts, though the plaintiffs in the CCJEF case argue the state has abandoned that system, called Educational Cost Sharing.

In every state, though, inequity between wealthier and poorer districts continues to exist. That's often because education is paid for with the amount of money available in a district, which doesn't necessarily equal the amount of money required to adequately teach students.

"Our system does not distribute opportunity equitably," a landmark 2013 report from a group convened by the former Education Secretary Arne Duncan, the Equity and Excellence Commission, reported.

This is mainly because school funding is so local. The federal government chips in about 8 to 9 percent of school budgets nationally, but much of this is through programs such as Head Start and free and reduced lunch programs. States and local governments split the rest, though the method varies depending on the state.

Nationally, high-poverty districts spend 15.6 percent less per student than low poverty districts do, according to U.S. Department of Education. Lower spending can irreparably damage a child's future, especially for kids from poor families. A 20 percent increase in per-pupil spending a year for poor children can lead to an additional year of completed education, 25 percent higher earnings, and a 20-percentage point reduction in the incidence of poverty in adulthood, according to a paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Violet Jimenez Sims, a Connecticut teacher, saw the differences between rich and poor school districts firsthand… .

"I noticed huge differences, and I ended up leaving because of the impact of those things," she told me. "Without money, there's just a domino effect." Students frequently had substitutes because so many teachers got frustrated and left, they didn't have as much time to spend on computer projects because they had to share computers, and they were suspended more frequently in the poor district, she said; in the wealthier area, teachers and guidance counselors would have time to work with misbehaving students rather than expelling

them right away.

Testimony during the CCJEF trial bears out the differences between poor areas like New Britain, Danbury, Bridgeport, and East Hartford, and wealthier areas like New Canaan, Greenwich, and Darien. Electives, field trips, arts classes, and gifted and talented programs available in wealthier districts have been cut in poorer ones. New Britain, where 80 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, receives half as much funding per special-education student as Darien. In Bridgeport, where class sizes hover near the contractual maximum of 29, students use 15 to 20-year-old textbooks; in New London, high-school teachers must duct tape windows shut to keep out the wind and snow and station trash cans in the hallways to collect rain. Where Greenwich's elementary school library budget is $12,500 per year (not including staffing), East Hartford's is zero.

All of this contributes to lower rates of success for poorer students. Connecticut recently implemented a system called NextGen to measure English and math skills, and college and career readiness. Bridgeport's average was 59.3 percent and New Britain 59.7 percent; Greenwich, by contrast, scored 89.3 percent and Darien scored 93.1. Graduation rates are lower in the poorer districts, [and] there's more chronic absenteeism.

The crux of the state's case [CCJEF trial] is that it spends enough on education, and that Connecticut has one of the country's best public school systems. The Educational Cost Sharing formula gets tinkered with by the legislature, the state says, and Connecticut still spends more on poor districts than many regions of the country. It says that what CCJEF is asking is essentially $2 billion more in taxpayer funding to make schools equitable—a sum that would be difficult to raise in a cash-strapped state… .

Yet the fact remains that delegating education funding to local communities increases inequality. That's especially true in Connecticut, which has some of the biggest wealth disparities in the country. Indeed, in Connecticut, rich and poor districts often abut each other. Bridgeport is in the same county as Greenwich and Darien; East Hartford is poor, but nearby West Hartford is affluent. How did a state like Connecticut, which had one of the first laws making public education mandatory, become so divided? And why does such an unequal system exist in a country that puts such a high priority on equality?

Many of the problems that have arisen in Connecticut's school system can be traced back to how public education was founded in this country, and how it was structured. It was a system that, at its outset, was very innovative and forward thinking. But that doesn't mean it is working for students today… .

Despite widespread acceptance of mandatory public education by the end of the 19th century, the task of educating students remained a matter for individual states, not the nation as a whole. And states still left much of the funding of schools up to cities and towns, which relied on property tax. In 1890, property taxes accounted for 67.9 percent of public-education revenues in the United States. This means that as America urbanized and industrialized and experienced more regional inequality, so, too, did the schools. Areas that had poorer families or less valuable land had less money for schools.

In the early part of the 20th century, states tried to step in and provide grants to districts so that school funding was equitable… . But then wealthier districts would spend even more, buoyed by increasing property

values, and the state subsidies wouldn't go as far as they once had to make education equitable.

The disparities became more and more stark in the decades after World War II, when white families moved out of the cities into the suburbs and entered school systems there, and black families were stuck in the cities, where property values plummeted and schools lacked basic resources. In some states, where school districts were run on the county level, costs could be shared between rich and poor districts by combining and integrating them, especially after *Brown v. Board of Education*. But in states like Connecticut, with deeper histories of public schooling, there were hundreds of separate districts, and it was much more difficult to combine them or to equalize funding across them.

The most aggressive attempt to ameliorate these disparities came in 1973, in a Supreme Court case, *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*. It began when a father named Demetria Rodriguez, whose sons attended a dilapidated elementary school in a poor area of San Antonio, sued the state of Texas, claiming that the way that schools were funded fundamentally violated the U.S. Constitution's equal-protection clause. Rodriguez wanted the justices to apply the same logic they had applied in *Brown v. Board of Education*—that every student is guaranteed an equal opportunity to education. The justices disagreed. In a 5–4 decision, they ruled that there is no right to equal funding in education under the Constitution.

With *Rodriguez*, the justices essentially left the funding of education a state issue, forgoing a chance for the federal government to step in to adjust things. Since then, school-funding lawsuits have been filed in 45 out of 50 states… .

Though it might seem odd that the Supreme Court has ruled that Americans have a right to live in a better zip code and a right to work at a company no matter their race, but not that every American child has the right to an equal education, there is legal justification for this. The founders didn't include a right to an education in the country's founding documents. Though the federal government is involved in many parts of daily life in America, schooling is, and has always been, the responsibility of the states.

The plaintiffs in the Connecticut lawsuit want the state to undertake an intense study of local schools and see what is needed to give each child a good education. They want the state to look at how much a district can reasonably raise from its property taxes, and then come up with a formula for how different districts can share revenues so that schooling is more equitable. They don't just want poor districts to get more money; they want poor districts to get enough money so that disadvantaged children can do just as well as children from wealthier areas.

"We think the state's responsibility is to ensure that every child, in every school, in every school district, regardless of whether they're impoverished, is given the opportunity to graduate from high school, and be able to be a full citizen and active in the civic life of their town, state and nation," Jim Finley, the principal consultant for CCJEF, told me.

If CCJEF wins, it might take a page from other states that have tried to radically overhaul how schools are funded from district to district. After the Vermont Supreme Court ruled that the state's education funding system was unconstitutional, the state in 1997 passed Act 60, which ensured that towns spent the same

amount of revenue per pupil. Districts paid into a common pool, which was then redistributed to poorer areas. And since the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in 1990 that the state's funding system was unconstitutional in the *Abbott v. Burke* case, New Jersey has been required to spend extra money in 31 of the state's poorest school districts… .

The federal government has provided additional funding for poor districts since 1965, when Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), but federal intervention in schools has always been controversial, with many parents and school-district leaders resisting federal dictates about curriculum and standards. The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, which reauthorized ESEA, received pushback after schools struggled to keep up with testing requirements and progress reports. That law was replaced in 2015 with the Every Student Succeeds Act, which rolled back the federal government's role in local education. [Note: It is not yet clear what the current federal government will do.]

In general, keeping schools equitable across a state is a tough task, said [a] school-finance expert. Immediately after a court case, there's a lot of momentum for redistributing revenues. But then, as time goes on, the impetus for giving more to poor districts wanes.

There have been suggestions that it is time to change the school-finance system to one that more successfully directs resources to where they're needed. Indeed, the United States is one of the only countries that allows the economies of local areas to determine the quality of local schools… .

It may seem logical that a state would step in and try to fund poorer districts; states don't want to be known for low test scores and graduation rates, and will pay the price if their residents don't get a good education. But giving money from rich districts to poor ones is politically difficult, as Connecticut has learned. And money is increasingly tight as states struggle with budget issues and have to spend more money on corrections, infrastructure, and Medicaid than they once did… .

Opponents of school-finance reform often argue that money isn't the problem, and that increased spending won't lead to better outcomes at schools in poor districts. But studies show that after courts order public schools to spend more on low-income students, students begin to do better and better in school. There may be challenges that go beyond what more equitable funding alone can solve, but it's the best place to start.

READING 13

Coached for the Classroom

Parents' Cultural Transmission and Children's Reproduction of Educational Inequalities

Jessica McCrory Calarco

> *Social class status enters into a child's experiences in school. Parents coach their children in behaviors that can result in social reproduction (discussed in Swartz in Chapter 1) of family class status. Parents and their children negotiate their relationships by teachers and schools through working-class "no-excuses" problem solving to middle-class "by-any-means" problem solving. Using qualitative data collection and analysis, Calarco provides a rich narrative illustrating how the social class of students influences their school experience and their agency.* Her vivid examples from interviews show the value of qualitative analysis in understanding student behaviors in schools.*

* agency—the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own choices independent of social class, religion, ethnicity, and other structural variables

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What role does social reproduction play in a child's school experience and future opportunities?
2. What methods of study does Calarco use, and what advantages do these have for understanding her research questions?
3. What did you learn about environmental factors such as social reproduction that can result in inequalities?

Children are not passive players in the reproduction of social inequalities. We know that children's behaviors vary with social class and generate stratified profits in school (Calarco 2011; Farkas 1996; Streib 2011). Less clear is how children learn to activate class-based strategies and how those lessons contribute to stratification. Scholars typically treat cultural acquisition as an implicit process in which class-based childrearing practices automatically shape children's behavior (Arnett 1995; Heath 1983; Lareau 2011). Given parents' active management of children's lives (Edwards 2004; Lareau 2000; Nelson 2010) and children's active resistance to parents' desires (Chin and Phillips 2004; Pugh 2009), however, cultural transmission may involve more agency than implicit socialization models imply. Furthermore, while scholars assume that parents' cultural coaching reproduces inequalities (e.g., Lareau 2011), research has not linked these efforts to their payoff for children in school.

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To investigate these possibilities, this study examines how parents actively transmit culture to children, how children respond, and how those responses generate stratified profits. I base these analyses on a longitudinal

ethnographic study of middle- and working-class families in one elementary school. I conducted observations and in-depth interviews with the children, their parents, and their teachers. I found that parents contributed to social reproduction by actively equipping children with class-based strategies that generated unequal outcomes when activated at school. Parents' relationships with the school varied by social class and shaped their beliefs about teachers' behavioral expectations. Those beliefs led parents to adopt contrasting strategies for managing problems at school and to coach their children to do the same. Specifically, working-class parents stressed "no-excuses" problem-solving, encouraging children to respect teachers' authority by not seeking help. Middle-class parents instead taught "by-any-means" problem-solving, urging children to negotiate with teachers for assistance. These ongoing and often deliberate coaching efforts equipped even reluctant children with the tools needed to activate class-based strategies on their own behalf. Such activation, in turn, prompted stratified responses from teachers and thus created unequal advantages in school.

This study has important implications. First, it clarifies class-based socialization models by showing that children's acquisition of class-based behaviors is neither implicit nor automatic; rather, cultural transmission involves active efforts by both parents and children. Second, it helps explain class-stratified childrearing patterns, suggesting that parents' efforts reflect beliefs stemming from their positions in the social hierarchy. Third, it demonstrates that by examining how cultural transmission varies along social class lines and by linking these processes to their payoff in schools, we can better understand the mechanisms of social reproduction.

Class, Culture, and Reproduction of Inequalities

Scholars conceptualize culture in myriad ways (Small, Harding, and Lamont 2010), but here I view culture as a "tool kit" that includes both "strategies of action" (Swidler 1986) and "logics of action" (DiMaggio 1997). Strategies of action are skills or behaviors used in social situations (Bourdieu 1990; Lareau and Weininger 2003). Logics of action are frames for interpreting situations (Harding 2007; Small 2004). This view of culture recognizes that individuals might behave differently in the same situation because they possess different strategies for use in that situation, or because they interpret the situation differently and thus choose to activate different strategies.

While cultural tool kits have numerous dimensions (e.g., gender, age, race, and ethnicity), research on tool kits generally focuses on social class (Bourdieu 1990; Lareau 2000). To identify social classes, tool-kit scholars typically use educational and occupational attainment (Aschaffenburg and Maas 1997; Condron 2009).[1] In doing so, they find that middle- and working-class individuals perceive themselves differently in relation to dominant institutions and also possess different strategies for navigating those settings (Lamont 1992, 2009; Lubrano 2004; Stuber 2012). Compared to their working-class counterparts, middle-class individuals experience a stronger sense of belonging in schools and other institutional arenas (Carter 2005; Khan 2010; Lareau 2000; Lubrano 2004). They also see their status as equaling or surpassing that of institutional professionals and are thus more comfortable demanding accommodations from institutions (Brantlinger 2003; Cucchiara and Horvat 2008; Lareau 2000).

Class-based cultural tool kits are closely linked to inequalities (Bourdieu 1990; Lareau and Weininger 2003). Within a social setting, behaviors will generate profits if they converge with the culture of that setting. Poorly aligned behaviors, in contrast, will produce few or no advantages, and may even result in sanctions.

Research shows, for example, that children's activation of class-based tool kits can generate unequal advantages. In school, children tend to behave in class-patterned ways that produce stratified consequences (Heath 1983; Nelson and Schutz 2007; Streib 2011). Middle-class children more readily voice their needs and, in doing so, attract more immediate attention and more complete support from teachers (Calarco 2011). These inequalities reflect teachers' and administrators' expectations that students will behave in "middle-class" ways (Carter 2005; Farkas 1996; Mehan 1980; Wren 1999). While working-class students must play catch-up, middle-class students come to school ready to meet these expectations (Bernstein 1990; Foley 1990; Lubienski 2000) and to reap the benefits—including higher grades and higher competence ratings from teachers (Farkas 1996; Jennings and DiPrete 2010; Tach and Farkas 2006). What research on culture and classroom interactions has not examined, however, is how children learn these different strategies or why they activate them in the classroom.

Families and Reproduction of Inequalities

Socialization scholars imply that children's class-based behaviors emerge automatically in response to class-based childrearing practices (Arnett 1995). Middle- and working-class parents typically adopt different childrearing styles, and their children behave in different ways (Chin and Phillips 2004; Edwards 2004; Heath 1983). Lareau (2011:6), for example, shows middle-class parents allowing children to negotiate and assert themselves and their children displaying an "emerging sense of entitlement." Working-class parents, in turn, emphasize obedience and deference to authority, and their children demonstrate an "emerging sense of constraint." Lareau concludes that children's behaviors are likely an implicit and automatic response to class-based childrearing practices.

Such explanations, however, have two important limitations. First, they ignore the possibility of more active cultural transmission (Elder 1974; Pugh 2009; Thorne 1993). Research shows that parents and children can both be very strategic in their actions. Middle-class parents, for example, intervene for their children at school (Brantlinger 2003; Lareau 2000; Nelson 2010), and working-class parents try to manage how their families are perceived by others (Edwards 2004). Yet, because scholars pay little attention to the logics of action that guide childrearing decisions, it is unclear whether or how parents deliberately try to equip children to manage their own challenges. Similarly, while scholars have documented children's rejection of parents' wishes (Chin and Phillips 2004; Pugh 2009; Zelizer 2002), they have not fully explored how children come to accept and utilize parents' class-based lessons. Lareau (2011), for example, observed children only in interactions with parents and did not conduct interviews with them. Thus, she cannot say how children behave in their parents' absence or how children make sense of and internalize what they learn.

Second, socialization research has done little to link class-based cultural transmission to social reproduction. Lareau (2011), for example, assumes that class-based childrearing patterns matter for inequalities. Yet, she does not show how children's entitlement or constraint generates stratified profits. Overall, while existing research highlights important social class differences in childrearing, children's behaviors, and classroom advantages, we know little about how the active efforts of parents and children contribute to cultural transmission or how this transmission reproduces inequalities.

This study examines … how parents prompt children to activate class-based behaviors and how those efforts contribute to social reproduction. I do so by answering the following research questions:

1. How do parents' understandings of appropriate classroom behavior vary with social class?
2. How do parents actively teach children class-based behaviors?
3. How do children come to activate parents' preferred behaviors?
4. How does this activation reproduce social inequalities?

I answer these questions with data from a longitudinal, ethnographic study of middle- and working-class, white families whose children attended the same elementary school… .

Parents' Understandings of Appropriate Behavior

Before examining parents' coaching of class-based strategies, it is important to understand how social class shaped these efforts. Research highlights social class differences in parents' interactions with their children (Chin and Phillips 2004; Lareau 2011) and with their children's schools (Cucchiara and Horvat 2008; Lareau 2000; Nelson 2010). Yet, scholars say little about the origins of such patterns. At Maplewood, I found that middle- and working-class parents had different strategies for managing problems at school. Those differences reflected parents' positions in the status hierarchy, which influenced their comfort interacting with the school and led them to adopt different class-based logics of action for interpreting the "appropriate" form of behavior in those settings.

Middle-Class Parents: Modeling By-Any-Means Problem-Solving

Middle-class parents adopted a by-any-means approach to solving problems with their children's schooling. They actively intervened to request support and accommodations, lobbying to have children tested for gifted or special needs programs and often writing notes excusing their children from homework and other activities… .

Middle-class parents adopted this by-any-means approach to problem-solving because they interpreted classroom interactions through a logic of entitlement. Given their educational and occupational attainment, middle-class parents appeared to perceive themselves as equal or greater in status relative to children's teachers. As a result, they were very comfortable intervening and questioning teachers' judgments regarding classroom assignments, ability group placements, testing procedures, and homework policies. One interview vignette described a student, "Brian," who came home complaining about being "bored" in math class… . Parents' responses to this vignette divided sharply by social class. While all the middle-class parents saw the situation as requiring immediate requests for accommodations, working-class parents tended to view deference to teachers' judgments as the appropriate response.

When asked open-ended questions about how Brian's parent should respond in this situation, all the middle-class parents said they would talk to the teacher or encourage Brian to talk to the teacher… .

This entitlement to intervene prompted middle-class parents to be highly involved at school and granted them insider status at Maplewood. Many middle-class mothers at Maplewood were full-time parents, but even employed mothers helped run volunteer programs, bake sales, and evening events… . In light of their involvement, middle-class parents were often deeply familiar with school expectations, procedures, and personnel. They also readily exchanged this information with other (typically middle-class) parents during play-dates, soccer games, school events, and phone conversations. As a result, middle-class parents knew the sequence and timing of state assessments, the weekly school schedule, and the procedures for requesting accommodations.

That insider status shaped middle-class parents' beliefs about teachers' behavioral expectations. They understood that—unlike when they were in school—teachers valued questions and requests from both parents

and students… .

Middle-class parents recognized that although their own teachers might have balked at such requests, school expectations had changed. They assumed that teachers would reward proactive help-seeking, and thus they adopted a logic of entitlement in managing problems at school.

Working-Class Parents: Modeling No-Excuses Problem-Solving

Unlike their middle-class counterparts, working-class parents adopted a no-excuses approach to educational challenges. In light of their limited educational and occupational attainment, working-class parents generally trusted the school to decide what was best for their children. Even when working-class parents were frustrated with teachers' decisions, they tended not to intervene… .

Working-class parents adopted this no-excuses approach to problem-solving because they interpreted classroom interactions through a logic of constraint. Given their educational and occupational attainment, they perceived themselves as less knowledgeable than "expert" educators and thus avoided questioning teachers' judgments… .

Even when their children were struggling, working-class parents "didn't wanna say anything." They assumed that teachers had a better understanding of children's academic needs, and that they as non-professionals were not equipped to influence decisions about children's schooling.

This reluctance to intervene prompted working-class parents to be less involved at school and relegated them largely to outsider status at Maplewood. Working-class parents occasionally attended conferences or concerts, but they spent relatively little time volunteering. Even the few working-class parents who did not work full-time were not a regular presence at school. As a result, working-class parents tended not to be very familiar with school expectations, procedures, and personnel. This lack of familiarity was compounded by the fact that working-class parents generally had few social connections with teachers or other Maplewood parents.

That outsider status shaped working-class parents' beliefs about teachers' behavioral expectations. Without inside information, working-class parents tended to rely on their own experiences in school as a guide… .

While the teachers at Maplewood did reprimand students for offenses like being off-task, name-calling, and running in the hallways, I never saw a teacher punish a student for seeking help. Middle-class parents, by virtue of their insider involvement, recognized that school expectations around question-asking had changed over time. Working-class parents, drawing only on their own school experiences, assumed that teachers would perceive requests as disrespectful, and thus they adopted a logic of constraint in managing problems at school.

Parents Teach Class-Based Behaviors

Parents' class-based logics shaped not only their comfort interacting with teachers, but also their beliefs about how to manage challenges appropriately at school. Such beliefs prompted parents to coach their children to activate similar strategies when interacting with teachers. Although parent–child coaching exchanges were generally serendipitous rather than planned, their messages were more deliberate and their intended consequences were more explicit than research on social class and childrearing typically implies (Arnett 1995; Heath 1983; Lareau 2011).

Middle-Class Parents: Coaching By-Any-Means Problem-Solving

Middle-class parents actively coached their *children* to adopt a by-any-means approach to dealing with classroom challenges… .

Middle-class parents' coaching efforts reflected their belief that children should draw on all available resources when managing problems at school. In interviews, these parents stressed that children should be comfortable approaching teachers with questions and requests for individualized support… .

Parents' active coaching efforts inspired middle-class children to "use their resources" when confronting problems in school… .

Working-Class Parents: Coaching No-Excuses Problem-Solving

Unlike their middle-class counterparts, working-class parents coached their children to adopt a no-excuses approach to problem-solving… .

Working-class parents' coaching efforts reflected their belief that children should draw only on their own resources and avoid inconveniencing teachers by seeking help… .

Parents Teach Class-Based Interpretations

Given the possibility of children's resistance to parents' intentions (Chin and Phillips 2004; Pugh 2009), parents engaged in deliberate and ongoing efforts to teach children not only different strategies of action for managing challenges, but also different logics of action to use in deciphering the "appropriate" strategy for a given situation. Effectively, parents taught children to see the world—or at least the classroom—through their eyes. These coaching exchanges were rarely planned; instead, they tended to occur as a natural response to situations as they arose. Yet, parents did convey their messages deliberately, not only by passively modeling different orientations, but also by actively shaping how children viewed themselves and their teachers. Through repeated exposure to such messages, even reluctant children tended to gradually adopt their parents' logics and to use them as a guide in activating "appropriate" strategies of action.

Middle-Class Parents: Teaching Entitlement

Middle-class parents actively encouraged their children to adopt a logic of entitlement in their interactions at school. They did so by teaching their children first, to feel deserving of support, and second, to recognize the benefits of entitlement and its by-any-means approach to problem-solving… .

These entitlement-oriented messages helped middle-class children—especially shy children—overcome reluctance around help-seeking… .

Messages about the benefits of by-any-means problem-solving also helped alleviate reluctance among middle-class children who worried that help-seeking might cause others to perceive them as "dumb" …

Working-Class Parents: Teaching Constraint

Working-class parents actively encouraged their children to adopt a logic of constraint in interactions at school. They did so by teaching their children, first, to perceive their own needs as secondary to those of others, and second, to recognize the importance of hard work.

Working-class parents equated help-seeking with selfishness and sought to discourage such behaviors by actively downplaying their children's individual needs… .

Sadie, for example, was loud and outgoing with her friends, but very polite and deferent to her teachers. As Sadie explained in an interview, she rarely asked for help:

> If you have a question about homework, you should just skip it. You don't wanna go up and bug the teacher. And then, if she [the teacher] says: "Did anybody have any problems with the homework?" Then you can raise your hand.

With time and coaching from their parents, working-class children gradually came to view classroom challenges through a logic of constraint. Doing so prompted working-class children to adopt a no-excuses

approach to problem-solving and to avoid seeking help.

Working-class parents also equated help-seeking with laziness. To discourage such behaviors, they emphasized the importance of hard work… .

In light of parents' active encouragement, working-class students came to view classroom interactions through a logic of constraint. They recognized the benefits of hard work and the possible negative consequences (social and academic) of actively voicing their needs… .

How Activation Reproduces Inequalities

… The active transfer of class-based culture from parents to children helped reproduce social inequalities. We know from prior research that children's activation of class-based strategies can generate stratified profits in the classroom (Calarco 2011; Farkas 1996; Streib 2011), and those profits result from teachers' responses to particular behaviors (Mehan 1980; Tach and Farkas 2006; Wren 1999).

This study provides further evidence of such patterns, showing that teachers reacted differently to by-any-means and no-excuses problem-solving, and those reactions had significant consequences… .

Discussion

While we know that social class differences in children's classroom behaviors contribute to inequalities (Calarco 2011; Farkas 1996; Streib 2011), existing research says little about how children learn to activate class-based strategies. Instead, and despite evidence that parents actively manage children's lives (Edwards 2004; Lareau 2000; Nelson 2010) and that children actively resist parents' wishes (Chin and Phillips 2004; Pugh 2009), scholars tend to imply that children's habits are an implicit response to parents' class-based childrearing styles (Heath 1983; Lareau 2011). Thus, it is unclear how or why parents coach class-based strategies, or how children respond to those efforts. Existing research often neglects to link class-based cultural transmission to inequalities in children's lives, focusing on the advantages parents generate for children (Brantlinger 2003; Cucchiara and Horvat 2008; Lareau 2011) and not on how parents teach children to secure advantages for themselves… .

Middle- and working-class parents adopted different approaches to interacting with educators and taught their children to do the same. Specifically, middle-class parents coached children to problem-solve "by-any-means," including seeking assistance from teachers. Working-class parents instead stressed a "no-excuses" approach to problem-solving, teaching their children to manage challenges on their own and to avoid pestering teachers with requests. These lessons, in turn, had important consequences for students. While many children were initially reluctant to heed parents' instructions, their reluctance prompted more active and ongoing coaching from parents. Such efforts eventually led children to adopt class-based logics of action and to use them in activating class-based problem-solving strategies.

These findings are important in that they highlight the agency in cultural transmission processes. Scholars of cultural transmission typically rely on top-down socialization models to explain similarities between parents and children (Kohn 1969; Lareau 2011). Childhood scholars critique these models for being overly deterministic (Corsaro 1994; Pugh 2009; Thorne 1993) but focus on children's peer groups and thus offer little evidence of intergenerational exchange. By examining how children acquire and activate class-based strategies of action, I find that both children and parents have more agency in cultural transmission than class socialization models imply. Parents, for example, worked to equip their children with the skills and orientations they believed were most appropriate. Furthermore, while children generally came to accept their parents' lessons, that process was far from automatic. Rather, it took an ongoing process of coaching, reluctance, and reinforcement to help children gradually acquire the skills and orientations needed to manage challenges in the "appropriate" (i.e., class-based) way.

Such findings also suggest that cultural transmission plays a critical role in reproducing social inequalities. Research on cultural transmission (e.g., Chin and Phillips 2004; Edwards 2004; Lareau 2011) rarely shows the payoff of parents' class-based socialization. Similarly, studies of classroom behavior show that children's activation of class-based strategies of action generates unequal outcomes (Calarco 2011; Farkas 1996; Streib 2011), but say little about how children acquire or learn to activate those strategies. This study bridges these gaps by linking parents' lessons to their stratified profits in school. In doing so, I found that middle-class children's by-any-means approach to problem-solving generated more advantages than did working-class

children's no-excuses approach. Specifically, teachers tended to recognize middle-class students' needs more quickly. They also provided middle-class students with more attention and assistance in overcoming challenges they faced. As a result, middle-class students typically completed their assignments more quickly and more accurately than did their working-class peers (see also Calarco 2011)… .

Conclusions

Social class differences in children's behaviors have real consequences for their opportunities and outcomes (Calarco 2011; Farkas 1996; Streib 2011). Yet because scholars typically treat class-based socialization as an automatic process (Arnett 1995; Heath 1983; Lareau 2011), it is less clear how children learn to behave in class-based ways or how lessons learned at home reproduce inequalities. Through observations and interviews with middle- and working-class children, their parents, and their teachers, I describe the active processes by which class-based cultures are transmitted across generations, and I show how these processes contribute to social reproduction. First, I link parents' beliefs about schooling to their cultural coaching efforts, describing how parents' beliefs reflect their status in relationship to the school. Second, I link parents' coaching efforts to children's activation of class-based behaviors, demonstrating that children use what they learn at home to manage problems in school. Finally, I link this activation process to its payoff in school, explaining how teachers' responses to children's problem-solving strategies affect their opportunities for support and success. By showing how each mechanism varies along social class lines, this study clarifies the origins of children's class-based behaviors and highlights the active processes by which parents and children together reproduce inequalities.

Note

1. For a discussion of alternative definitions of social class, see Lareau and Conley (2008).

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Projects for Further Exploration

1. Using an academic database, look up *student* and *"out of school" learning*. Relate this to family, social class, and community influences.
2. After reading the selections in this chapter, construct an interview form that includes various environmental influences on schools. Now interview a superintendent, a principal, or several teachers in a school district in your area to learn how environmental (social context) factors influence them and the decision-making processes in the district. If you interviewed individuals in different school roles, how did their answers differ? Projects in later chapters will ask you to collect additional data on this school district.
3. As a part of the educational environment, how do you or might you influence what happens in schools?

Chapter 4 Schools as Organizations: Formal and Informal Education

The bell rings, lockers slam, conversations end, and classroom doors shut as the school day begins. We are all familiar with these signs that the formal school day is about to start. Schools provide the framework for both meeting important societal goals and for preparing young people for future statuses and roles. School organizations, like other organizations, have formally stated goals, criteria for membership, and a hierarchy of roles and relationships, yet they also have informal goals, such as serving as a place where people form friendships and develop their individual identities.

This chapter examines the formal and informal organization of schools. The formal organization refers to the explicit and intended aspects of the education system; this includes its structure and stated goals. Organizationally, schools are divided into classrooms, the day into periods, teachers into subject areas and ranks, and students into groups by grades or performance. Like other formal organizations, schools have memberships composed of individuals holding different status positions necessary to carry out the functions and goals of the school. Each position holder has certain roles to perform—administrating, teaching, learning, and providing support functions, such as driving the bus and preparing the meals. These activities are the processes of schools, the means to meet stated school goals. These roles and activities are also the subject of Chapter 5.

Behind the formal organization, rules, classroom and school size and structure, and goal statements is another layer to explore. The informal organization of schools refers to the implicit and unintended aspects of education—what "really" goes on in schools. Here, lessons are learned that have not been explicitly approved by the school board, administrators, or teachers. It is where teachers craft their professional role in individualized ways; it is also where students learn as much about citizenship and friendship as they do about grammar and mathematics. It is where unintended features of the school environment—including its climate, its architecture, and demographics—come together to form the context in which students develop their social identities and learn about how they and others fit into a larger whole.

To understand how schools function as formal organizations, one must first recognize that at their core, schools are bureaucracies. Bureaucracies are large, complex organizations, commonly found in the realms of business and government. They are multilayered, hierarchical organizations that operate according to universal standards and procedures. The educational system in the United States, for example, is organized at the very top by the U.S. secretary of education, who runs the Department of Education; authority then filters down to state boards of education—which typically have greater operational control than those at the federal level—and then down to districts and school superintendents. Finally, principals and teachers execute educational policy on the front lines and have immense power and influence over their schools and classrooms.

While bureaucracies ideally operate as rational, efficient ways of completing tasks and rewarding individuals, they can also be impersonal, inefficient, and unresponsive to human needs. Their complexity can give rise to

internal conflict over roles, authority, and purposes. Considering its formal purposes, the educational system and all who work within it have the common goal of preparing students for the next stage in their lives by transmitting shared knowledge, skills, and societal values that will be useful there. Schools also sort and select students into different categories—college material, gifted, average, learning disabled, disruptive, and so forth—with consequences for future adult status. Yet conflicts occur over how to impart these lessons and how to prepare students for adulthood. Conflicts can emerge, for example, between classroom teachers and the school board; with different interest groups in communities, such as religious, political, parental, or other groups; and between schools and the state or federal government. For example, when it comes to standards-based educational policies like the Common Core, teachers may stand in opposition to the U.S. secretary of education (formerly Arne Duncan, who championed the policy), voicing the concern that they were not consulted in the development of these educational standards and that the resulting standards are too difficult, confusing, or developmentally inappropriate. Parents and schools may come in conflict, as well, disagreeing over whose responsibility it is to provide students with sex education or spiritual guidance. Conflicts over educational goals can be seen in readings throughout the text.

The readings in this chapter, as well as those in Chapter 5, approach educational institutions as formal organizations, composed of large systems as well as individual classrooms. To begin our exploration of schools as formal organizations, we feature Rebecca Barr and Robert Dreeben's classic piece, "How Schools Work." They describe the formal organization of the school, giving the reader a look at the division of labor within schools, the roles of participants, the organization of classrooms, and how time structures the day. The primary insight of this piece is that while "formal academic instruction" is the primary goal of the educational system, the execution of this task is not simple, nor is it merely relegated to the classroom teacher. Instead, "teaching students" is a multilayered task, accomplished through the interlocking roles found at various levels of the school hierarchy. Effective education is a remarkable feat, one that is implemented within classrooms but is ultimately the product of cooperation across a complex, bureaucratic organization.

Another aspect of the formal organization of the educational system centers on the formal curriculum: what is taught in schools. Each era seems to witness an ebb and flow in social conceptions of what should be taught in school. During the Space Race of the 1950s and '60s, schools offered a curriculum focused on math and science; during the 1970s, hippies, activists, and the human potential movement ushered in a more student-centered, open curriculum. Since the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2002 under President George W. Bush, educational policy in the United States has emphasized a standards-based approach, where math and English instruction takes center stage, and social science, music, the arts, and other forms of knowledge receive less attention. A current controversy in the formal curriculum has emerged over how to teach U.S. history. A handful of states have sought to ban or at least modify the content of A.P. U.S. History courses, concerned that such courses teach a liberal bias, foster an overly critical attitude toward the nation, and do not sufficiently encourage patriotism or "American exceptionalism." These recent debates echo Tennessee's effort in the early 20th century to ban the teaching of evolution or any other theory that contradicts the biblical story of the divine creation of man. This issue was settled by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1925 in *The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes* (also known as the Scopes Monkey Trial), which determined the respective place of science and religion in the formal public school curriculum.

Turning now to the informal system within schools, it is clear that students also learn a great deal beyond the explicit academic curriculum. Understanding this is critical to understanding how schools work. Beyond the formal curriculum is the "hidden curriculum," defined by the psychiatrist Benson R. Snyder (1971) in his book by the same name as the "implicit demands (as opposed to the explicit obligations of the visible curriculum) that are found in every learning institution and which students have to find out and respond to in order to survive within it" (p. 6). These unwritten regulations and unintended consequences entail an education in themselves and determine how we learn to cope with unspoken expectations in life.

Looking at the hidden curriculum from a theoretical standpoint, conflict theorists (described in Chapter 1) see it as a tool to impose social control over students—control that ultimately reproduces students' social class positions. Rather than teaching useful knowledge, conflict theorists see schools as promoting discipline and obedience such that lower- and working-class students essentially are prepared for the routine drudgery of working-class jobs. In his classic ethnography, Paul Willis (1979) describes two groups of English students, the "lads" and the "ear'oles." The working-class lads experience an informal hidden curriculum that reinforces their working-class status and prepares them for factory work. The middle-class ear'oles suck up the knowledge from teachers and receive praise from them in preparation for further education and success in higher-level professional jobs. The lads show resistance and rejection through their "counterschool culture" and substitute it with a "shop floor culture," emphasizing chauvinism, toughness, and machismo. According to Willis, the lads do this as a way of coping with the rejection and denigration they experience through the middle-class school culture and hidden curriculum. Unwittingly, through their resistance, they resign themselves to a working-class adult life that echoes the lack of autonomy and dignity that they experience at school. In another ethnography, Jay MacLeod (2008) provides a vivid description of two groups of kids from a poor housing project and their experiences negotiating the educational system. The Brothers, a group of black boys, maintained high aspirations and believed that they could eventually succeed in school and society, with the gradual tearing down of racism. The Hallway Hangers, a group of white boys, have given up on the system, and have resigned themselves to an adulthood with little comfort or autonomy. MacLeod shows how the differences between these peer groups in terms of school orientations and adult aspirations are shaped by the messages and experiences they receive within the informal system of the school.

Functionalist theorists, like French sociological pioneer Émile Durkheim, see the hidden curriculum as essential for knitting society together into a cohesive whole. Published in 1925 after his death, Durkheim's (1973) classic work *Moral Education* frames schools as the central place where students learn order, discipline, and the collective values that foster civic engagement and cooperation. As shown by Harry L. Gracey in the reading featured here, the informal curriculum of kindergarten can be likened to "academic bootcamp." In this piece, Gracey uses an ethnographic approach to examine the informal system of education, starting with kindergarten. He describes a day in the life of a kindergarten class, focusing on the routines promoted by teachers and learned by students. He shows how both the formal curriculum and the ordinary scheduling and routines of the classroom pass on informal lessons about punctuality, obedience, respect, and other rules that govern the classroom. The work of Roger P. Weissberg and Jason Cascarino, also featured in this chapter, carries the work forward, questioning the type of civic literacy and socioemotional learning students should

receive in school in order to be effective friends, workers, and citizens. Together, these works illustrate the interaction between formal goals of schools and informal lessons learned by children, as they are prepared to move to the next levels of schooling and eventually into society.

Many of the best-known studies of the informal system use qualitative methods in which researchers immerse themselves in the school settings to observe the subtle workings of schools and messages students receive from schools. The not-so-obvious aspects of the informal system of schooling include these subtle messages and the power relationships inherent in any system. These aspects of schooling cannot be studied by looking at lists of goals, school documents, descriptions of role responsibilities, or recorded test scores. In fact, most studies of the informal system are ethnographies (see Chapter 2), composed of carefully documented observations of interactions and behaviors that reflect school climate. Take, for example, Karin Martin's work in this chapter, "Becoming a Gendered Body." She uses the ethnographic approach within two preschool settings, focusing on the seemingly minute interactions between teachers and students and among students that take place, day in and day out. She, like many scholars of education, examines how schools function as a site for secondary socialization and the molding of our most basic identities. Through her careful ethnographic eye, we begin to see how verbal and physical interactions in preschool, along with the allocation of space, gradually shape students into the little boys and girls we already think they are. It's not that girls are born small and compliant or that boys are naturally loud and rambunctious, she shows us; it's that schools subtly inculcate these gender roles through the hidden curriculum within the informal system. Other research on education, not published in this text, picks up where Martin leaves off and examines how teachers socialize students in the elementary classroom (Sadker & Sadker, 1995), how students socialize each other on the playground and in peer interactions (Eder, 1995; Morris, 2012; Pascoe, 2011; Thorne, 1993), and how the organizational environment of colleges and universities exerts an influence even on the gender and social class development of college students (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2014).

Other research on education shows racial and ethnic identities are learned in school. Again, working within the ethnographic tradition, researchers like Karolyn Tyson (Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005) and Simon Ispa-Landa and Jordan Conwell (2015) show that the meaning of academic success can become *raced*, depending on the demographic characteristics and other organizational features of the school. Students learn lessons about who they are and who other students are, in this case with respect to race and ethnicity, and the meaning of those identities for academic success. These lessons are not independent of school context. Queenie Zhu (2014) contributes similar insights. In her case study of two diverse high schools in suburban California, Zhu found that at Rancho High School, where students were physically segregated by ability and academic interests and where lower-track students were relegated to less visible and less desirable areas of the school, upper-track students were seen as "better than" lower-track students. Peer relations were more egalitarian at Bonita High School. There, the circular design of campus and the organization of classrooms by subject matter (rather than track assignment) set the stage for more fluid student interactions. Because different social groups shared the same spaces and interacted within those spaces, there was less stratification of students; although different groups existed, students did not see some groups as better than others. Her work shows that the informal environment of the school—namely, its architecture—can influence the students' friendships, the racialization of their identities, and the racialized meaning ascribed to academic

success.

A profound lesson of research on the sociology of education is that far more happens in school than instruction in the formal curriculum. As a site for secondary socialization, it is a place where we learn the culture of the wider society and where we develop our identities and understandings of where we and others fit within this society. One final insight into such processes is offered in this chapter by Ingrid E. Castro and Mark Conor Sujak. They provide a contemporary take on the hidden curriculum, showing how both curricular and organizational features of the school shape the educational experiences and social identities of students who are sexual minorities (LGBTQ). In short, what happens in school is never merely about grades or academic content. It is nothing less than the molding of society and our understandings of the places we all occupy within it.

Ultimately, the school climate, or culture of a school, is an elusive yet highly consequential thing. School climate is one aspect of the informal system that refers to several parts of the school experience: the interactions that result from grouping students, the resistance of some students to schooling, and teachers' expectations of students that affect their achievement levels. Factors inside and outside the school influence school climate (Ballantine, Hammack, & Stuber, 2017). School climate can be measured by considering teacher expectations, academic norms, students' sense of futility (giving up on school), role definitions, grouping patterns, and instructional practices. This climate can be immensely powerful in shaping the effectiveness of schools—namely, whether schools foster student learning, appropriate socioemotional development, and civic engagement. As you delve into the reading selections that make up this chapter, consider how your own learning and identity have been shaped by both the formal and informal organization of the education system and how your knowledge, interests, and identity may have been different within a different organizational context.

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READING 14

How Schools Work

Rebecca Barr and Robert Dreeben

In this excerpt from Rebecca Barr and Robert Dreeben's book, How Schools Work, *the authors discuss the functioning of schools and classrooms. They examine different levels of organization in school districts, starting from district offices down to instructional groups in classrooms; they identify distinct events that take place in each unit, and how what happens in one unit affects others. They also discuss the roles and division of labor among some participants within the education system. Within classrooms there are instructional groups, often by ability level of students. Organization of time is another determinant of how schools work. From the length of the class period and day to the number of days in a year, the way time is structured affects opportunities to learn. The importance of this excerpt is in providing a framework needed to understand the organization of educational systems and how schools work. The reading provides an example of the levels of analysis in the open systems model.*

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What are topics to consider and methods that can be used to study how schools work?
2. How does this article relate to the open systems model and levels of organizational analysis?
3. What is the division of labor that influences classroom activities, directly and indirectly, and how does this relate to a school system with which you are familiar?

Our formulation begins with the idea that school systems are organizations that like others can be readily subject to sociological analysis. In all organizations labor is divided, which means that different activities are carried out in the different parts and that the parts are connected to each other in a coherent way. The parts of school systems are very familiar. They consist of a central administration with jurisdiction over a school district as well as local administrations situated in each school with responsibility for what happens therein. The business of schooling, mainly instruction, takes place in classrooms run by teachers; and teachers preside not only over classes but over parts of them as well when they rely upon grouped forms of instruction. We will show how the work that gets done in district offices, schools, classes, and instructional groups is different in character, that these separate jurisdictions are locations for carrying on different sorts of activities. Indeed, this proposition is true for teachers as classroom instructors and as group instructors in that teachers do different things in organizing a class from what they do while instructing subgroups within it. Part of the answer to our question of how schools work, then, is to be found by identifying the distinct events happening at each level of school system organization. A second part of the answer can be found by discovering how the events characteristic of one level influence those taking place at another. It would be a strange organization indeed if the parts were hermetically sealed off from each other; if, for example, what the principal did had no bearing on what teachers did and if what teachers did made no difference for what students did and learned. Yet it is

precisely the failure to come up with satisfactory answers to these questions that has caused so much grief in our understanding of educational effects. The answer must come from identifying correctly what the activities are and from being able to trace their antecedents and effects across pathways that connect one level to another.

From *How Schools Work* (pp. 2–11), by R. Barr and R. Dreeben, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Copyright 1991 by University of Chicago Press. Reprinted with permission.

The third part of the answer pertains not so much to what to look for as it does to how to look for it. School systems, like other forms of social existence, are characterized by variability. We can learn about their workings by attending to the different ways that comparable parts act: different schools in the same system, different classes in the same school, different groups in the same class. What can vary in these levels of school organization is the way in which resources are allocated, transformed, and used. A particular resource, like books, may be purchased by the district office. All fourth grade mathematics texts, for example, can then be distributed to each elementary school, thence to be stocked in each fourth grade class. Thus, a simple process of resource transmission takes place. From there, teachers in the same school may use the text in almost identical ways or in vastly different ways depending on how they organize their instructional programs. The program itself determines the instructional use, and hence the meaning, of the resource. Accordingly, insofar as the school is no more than a transmission belt for transporting books from the district office to the classroom, school-by-school comparisons will show similar activities. Class-by-class comparisons in textbook use, however, might show sharp contrasts. Depending upon the nature of those class contrasts, they may average out to show no school differences or bunch up to show marked school differences. In either case, it is the comparison of events at the same level—school and class in these examples—that tells us what is going on.

The Formulation

Levels of Organization

Labor in school systems is divided; it is differentiated by task into different organizational levels in a hierarchical arrangement. While we customarily think about hierarchies as pertaining to relations of authority, rank, and power, they not only are manifestations of stratification and status distinction, but also represent organizational differentiation, a manifestation of labor being specialized and other resources distributed to different locations, of the elements of production having been both separated and tied together in some workable arrangement. We are concerned here with hierarchy in this latter sense.

In an educational division of labor, school systems comprise several levels of administrative and staff officers as well as "production" workers occupying positions with district, school, and classroom jurisdictions. In addition, school systems are differentiated according to the resources they use, such as time and physical objects—like books—that constitute instructional materials. As we shall indicate shortly, time is a resource that has meaning at all levels of the hierarchy, but its meaning has different manifestations at each level. Textbooks, by contrast, are productive resources only inside classrooms. School systems also contain one additional element: students who are both the clients of the organization, the intended beneficiaries of its services, and, because schools are engaged in effecting change in children, productive resources in their own right because they participate directly and actively in their own learning.

When organizations are differentiated, it is because their parts make distinct contributions to the overall productive enterprise. This means that people located hierarchically at different places perform different kinds of activities; it also means that resources come into play in different ways depending upon where they are utilized in the productive process. A complete formulation of school production, therefore, should identify all relevant combinations of people, time, and material resources at each hierarchical level.

More specifically, school systems characteristically contain a managerial component responsible for centralized financial, personnel, procurement, plant maintenance, and supervisory functions applicable to all their constituent elements. This component is also engaged in direct dealings with agencies of the federal and state governments as well as with locally based interest groups and units of municipal government. Activities occurring at this managerial level have nothing directly to do with running schools or teaching students but rather are concerned with the acquisition of resources, with general supervision, and with the maintenance of relations with the surrounding community including suppliers of labor. We refer to this as the district level of organization; its jurisdiction includes all schools in the district.

Even though districts are divided into levels (elementary and secondary) related to the ages of students, and some are also divided into geographical areas as well as functional units, we are primarily concerned—at the next lower hierarchical level—with schools. Contrary to conventional belief, schools are not organizational units of instruction. They are structures akin to switching yards where children within a given age range and from a designated geographical area are assigned to teachers who bring them into contact with approved

learning materials, specified as being appropriate to age or ability, during certain allotted periods of time. Schools deal in potentialities; they assemble a supply of teachers, of students, and of resources over a given period of time. Their central activities are the assignment of children to specific teachers, the allocation of learning materials to classrooms, the arrangement of a schedule so that all children in the school can be allotted an appropriate amount of time to spend on subjects in the curriculum, and the integration of grades so that work completed in one represents adequate preparation for the next.

These activities are the primary responsibility of school principals; they are core functions peculiar to the school level of organization. This is so because decisions affecting the fate of all classrooms in a school are not likely to be left to individuals (teachers) who have in mind primarily classroom interests rather than whole school interests and whose self-interest puts them in a poor position to settle disputes among equals. Nor are they likely to be left to district-wide administrators, whose locations can be too remote and jurisdictions too widespread to allow them to make informed decisions about local school events.

While these decisions constitute the peculiar core activities of school level administration, they by no means exhaust the responsibilities of school administrators, which frequently include such matters as planning curriculum; establishing disciplinary standards; and making school policies for homework, decorum in public places, and the like. But while such concerns are frequently characteristic of school administration, they are not peculiar to it because district-wide administrators and teachers also participate in them at the school level in fulfilling responsibilities within their own respective jurisdictions.

While instruction is not the business of the school, it is the business of classrooms and of teachers responsible for the direct engagement of students in learning activities. Aggregations of children are assigned to specific teachers who direct their activities and bring them into immediate contact with various sorts of learning materials. These activities are more than potentialities because children's active engagement working with teachers and materials is what enables them to learn.

Because classes contain diverse aggregations of children, it is not automatic that the instruction appropriate for one member of the aggregation will be appropriate for another. Hence, teachers in the lower grades characteristically create an additional level of suborganization to manage activities not easily handled in a grouping as large as the class. For example, in primary grade reading, there are suborganizations called instructional groups that represent still another level of organizational differentiation.

Finally, there are individual students. It is only individuals who work on tasks, and it is only they who learn; so that while work tasks might be set for all students in the class or in a group, the individual members vary in how much work they do and in how much they learn.

We argue here not only that school systems can be described by their constituent organizational levels, but that the events, activities, and organizational forms found at each level should be seen as addressing distinct as well as partially overlapping agendas. Districts, schools, classes, and instructional groups are structurally differentiated from each other; and what is more they make different contributions to the overall operation of the school system. We recognize that not all schools have precisely the same organizational pattern. In the

upper elementary grades, for example, formalized instructional groups characteristically used for primary level reading might or might not be employed; and in secondary schools, which lack self-contained classrooms, a departmental level of organization usually appears as does formal tracking that distinguishes students largely on the basis of ability within schools but not within classes. Despite these variations, the general principle of differentiated structures and agendas holds.

Linkages Between Levels

If organizational levels are as distinct as this analysis suggests, how is it possible to think about a coherent production process for the whole school district organization? How should the connections between levels be formulated? We contend that each level of a school system has its own core productive agenda even though certain activities are performed at more than one level. That is, productive events of differing character occur at each level to effect outcomes that are themselves characteristic of each level. For example, a school outcome becomes a productive condition in classes yielding in turn a class outcome; the class outcome in turn becomes a productive element for instructional groups yielding a group outcome; and so on. We see, then, a set of nested hierarchical layers, each having a conditional and contributory relation to events and outcomes occurring at adjacent ones.

Consider an example of how levels of organization are connected to each other to constitute school production. As we observed earlier, classroom characteristics do not directly affect individual learning; they influence the formation of instructional groups. This might seem to be a strange statement since everyone knows that classroom teachers are responsible for instructing all children in a class. However, the teacher's job, we maintain, is first to transform an aggregation of children into an arrangement suitable for establishing an instructional program. In first grade reading, this usually means creating instructional reading groups. Hence, before any instruction takes place, decisions are made about how to arrange the class; whether to teach everyone together in one group, as in recitation; whether to establish subgroups in which only some children work intensively with the teacher while the others proceed by themselves with little supervision; whether to set everyone to work independently at their desks to perform at their own rate such more or less individualized tasks as are contained in workbooks.

The results of these classroom decisions are not instructional, nor do they appear as individual learning. They are alternative grouping arrangements which should be thought of as class outcomes, or values. We must draw a distinction between what teachers do in organizing classes for instruction and the instruction they actually provide for the groupings of children that make up classroom organization. Down the road, those grouping arrangements influence individual learning through a chain of connections consisting of instructional activities. Individual learning, however, is not itself a class outcome. As our story unfolds, we will show how class grouping arrangements determine certain characteristics of the groups composing them, in particular the level of children's ability characteristic of each classroom group. As it turns out, this level of ability is a direct determinant of certain instructional activities undertaken by teachers, who treat differently composed groups in different ways.

One form this treatment takes is the amount of material covered, which we construe as an outcome, or value,

created by instructional groups. (Note again: individual learning is not a group outcome any more than it is a class outcome.) Then, depending on how much material children cover over a given span of time, in combination with their own characteristics, they learn proportionally more or less. In sum, group arrangements are the value created at the class level, coverage the value at the group level, and learning the value at the individual level. Note particularly that the activities and outcomes characteristic of each level are qualitatively distinct—grouping, coverage, learning—and that they are linked together in a coherent manner.

Most readers will have recognized that we have been describing aspects of the familiar phenomenon of ability grouping, but not in a familiar way. Instead of simply distinguishing students according to whether they belong to homogeneous or heterogeneous groups, which is the usual (and not very illuminating) way of studying grouping, we have tried to identify distinct though related activities that refer to sets of decisions that constitute class organization, grouped instruction, and individual learning.

This brief analysis shows the concatenation of distinct activities that constitute and surround classroom instruction. An implication of this analysis is that we can take any single educationally relevant resource and trace its manifestations across several hierarchical levels of school system organization. To illustrate the logic of the formulation, we will consider here the resource of time.

A school district administration makes three kinds of decisions about time. The first reveals its responsibilities of law enforcement to the state: the schools must remain open for a stipulated number of days to qualify for state aid. While this enforcement of state law places an outside limit on time available for teaching, it does not bear directly on teaching, instruction, or learning. Furthermore, when the length of the academic year is combined with a determination about the length of the school day, the second type of district decision is made: how much time teachers (and other employees) will work as part of a contractual agreement with suppliers of labor. The third type of decision pertains to when the schools will start and finish each academic year, open and close each day, and recess for vacations, decisions that determine when and whether parents can leave the household for work and arrange for the care of very young children. Basic time considerations, then, at the district level of organization are tied up with law enforcement, labor contracts, and the integration of the school system with households in the community; and district outcomes can be defined in these terms.

School systems, of course, do not hire teachers in general, but teachers who instruct in particular subjects in secondary schools and in a variety of basic skills in elementary schools. Hiring teachers by subject and skill presumes that curricular priorities have been established, which means that decisions have been made about how much time will be devoted to each segment of the curriculum: to English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, and so on, in secondary schools; to reading, arithmetic, science, social studies, and so on, in elementary schools. At the level of schools, these decisions become manifest in the time schedule, a formal statement written in fine-grained time units of how much time will be devoted to each subject matter and to extracurricular pursuits.

The school schedule is really a political document that acknowledges the influences of administrative directives and the preferences of teachers and parents expressing varying views about the welfare of the student body, of individual students, and of different types of students. It embodies past decisions about how much

ordinary instruction there will be, in which subjects, at which more or less desirable times, and in which more or less desirable places. It expresses how segregated or desegregated classes will be in response to higher level administrative directives as well as the integration of the handicapped in regular and special classes. These resultant priorities conventionally expressed in the time schedule are an outcome of school level organization.

The curricular priorities expressed in the school time schedule represent temporal constraints upon the work of teachers in classrooms. While in secondary schools the order of classes throughout the day is established by the schedule itself, in elementary schools the teachers themselves arrange activities within the confines of daily time allotments, deciding which activities come earliest in the day, which next, and which last, with some flexibility about how long each successive activity will last. In addition to determining which activities take place during the "better" and "worse" times of the day, teachers also establish, within school guidelines and across parts of the curriculum (reading, arithmetic, science), how long instruction will last in each of a variety of classroom formats (whole class, grouped, individual instruction) and how much time gets wasted through interruptions, poor planning, and transitions between activities. At the classroom level, then, teachers allocate time in ways that bear directly upon instruction by determining the amount of time that students will have available for productive work in various subject areas.

Finally, given the time that teachers make available for productive work, students then decide how much of that time to use and to waste, and in so doing influence the amount they will learn.

What we have done here is to trace the allocation of time through the layers of school system organization to show how it takes on different manifestations as district, school, class, and individual phenomena. We have also shown how the nature of time at one level becomes a time condition for events occurring at the next lower level.

What our formulation does is very simple. It locates productive activities at all levels of the school system that in more common but less precise parlance are known as administration and teaching. It also states that productive activities specific to levels produce outcomes specific to levels. Accordingly, we distinguish carefully between the productive processes that constitute the working of school organization from the outcomes, or values, produced by those processes. They are not the same thing, although they have commonly been confused in discussions about educational effects. The distinction between production and value not only is important conceptually, but provides a principle that ties the parts of the levels of school organization into a coherent pattern.

The formulation also carries us some distance in thinking about how the effectiveness of schools should be viewed. The common practice of using individual achievement (or aggregations of individual achievement) as a primary index to gauge whether schools are productive is of limited value because there are other outcomes that are the direct result of productive processes occurring at higher levels of school system organization. There is no question that achievement is an important outcome at the individual level; it may or may not be an important outcome at other levels, as our previous analyses of time and grouping indicate. Perhaps, for example, the properly understood outcome of instructional groups is a group-specific rate of covering learning materials or the amount of time a teacher makes available for instruction, outcomes that when considered at

the individual level are properly construed as conditions of learning. An important class level outcome may be the creation of an appropriate grouping arrangement or the establishment of a productive time schedule, both of which are conditions bearing on the nature of group instruction.

Similarly, at the school level, the important outcomes may be the allocation of time to curricular areas that makes enough time available for basic skill subjects, an assignment of teachers to classes that makes the most appropriate use of their talents or that provides equitable work loads, or the appropriate coordination of skill subjects from year to year so that children are prepared for the work of the succeeding grade. At the district level, perhaps negotiating labor contracts that satisfy employees, administrators, and the taxpayers, or having a satisfactory book and materials procurement policy represent significant outcomes.

READING 15

Learning the Student Role

Kindergarten as Academic Boot Camp

Harry L. Gracey

The organizational structure of schools cannot be studied in isolation from the roles of individuals holding positions within the system. Part of the informal organization includes the subtle messages students learn about their expected roles. Bridging Chapter 4 on organizations and Chapter 5 on roles is Harry L. Gracey's classic discussion of young students learning their roles within the organizational structure. Here, he echoes some of the thoughts offered by one of sociology's founding fathers, Émile Durkheim in his classic work, "Moral Education." Both authors show how schools inculcate a sense of "civic education" in students, and socialize them with lessons that help integrate them as individuals into a collect society. Here, Gracey describes the socialization process by documenting the organizational structure of the classroom and a day in the life of a kindergarten teacher and class. New initiates to formal schooling learn the expectations of school so that they will fit into the educational system and later into the world of work. In these excerpts from this classic article, some of the references may seem a bit old-fashioned; however, the article conveys a powerful message about the way students are socialized in school and for what purposes.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What are the formal and informal organizational structures of kindergarten classrooms, and what role do they play in preparing kindergarten students for the next stages of school life?
2. Taking the message about learning the student role, how is this role perpetuated and expanded through other levels of schooling? In what ways is the student role and hidden curriculum similar in college, and how is it different?
3. To what extent do you think the lessons highlighted in this article are intentional? That is, are teachers purposefully socializing students with these lessons?

Education must be considered one of the major institutions of social life today. Along with the family and organized religion, however, it is a "secondary institution," one in which people are prepared for life in society as it is presently organized. The main dimensions of modern life, that is, the nature of society as a whole, are determined principally by the "primary institutions," which today are the economy, the political system, and the military establishment. Education has been defined by sociologists, classical and contemporary, as an institution which serves society by socializing people into it through a formalized, standardized procedure. At the beginning of this century, Émile Durkheim told student teachers at the University of Paris that education "consists of a methodical socialization of the younger generation." He went on to add:

> It is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual, and moral states

> that are demanded of him by the political society as a whole and by the special milieu for which he is specifically destined. To the egotistic and asocial being that has just been born, [society] must as rapidly as possible add another capable of leading a moral and social life. Such is the work of education.[1]

From "Learning the Student Role: Kindergarten as Academic Boot Camp," by H. L. Gracey, in *The Sociology of Education: A Sourcebook* (pp. 82–95), edited by H. R. Stub, Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press. Copyright 1975 by Harry Gracey. Reprinted with permission.

"The education process," Durkheim said, "is above all the means by which society perpetually recreates the conditions of its very existence."[2] The contemporary educational sociologist, Wilbur Brookover, offers a similar formulation in his recent textbook definition of education.

> Actually, therefore, in the broadest sense education is synonymous with socialization. It includes any social behavior that assists in the induction of the child into membership in the society or any behavior by which the society perpetuates itself through the next generation.[3]

The educational institution is, then, one of the ways in which society is perpetuated through the systematic socialization of the young, while the nature of the society which is being perpetuated—its organization and operation, its values, beliefs, and ways of living—is determined by the primary institutions. The educational system, like other secondary institutions, serves the society which is created by the operation of the economy, the political system, and the military establishment. Schools, the social organizations of the educational institution, are today for the most part large bureaucracies run by specially trained and certified people. There are few places left in modern societies where formal teaching and learning is carried on in small, isolated groups, like the rural, one-room schoolhouses of the last century. Schools are large, formal organizations which tend to be parts of larger organizations, local community school districts. These school districts are bureaucratically organized and their operations are supervised by state and local governments. In this context, as Brookover says:

> The term education is used … to refer to a system of schools, in which specifically designated persons are expected to teach children and youth certain types of acceptable behavior. The school system becomes a unit in the total social structure and is recognized by the members of the society as a separate social institution. Within this structure a portion of the total socialization process occurs.[4]

Education is the part of the socialization process which takes place in the schools; and these are, more and more today, bureaucracies within bureaucracies.

Kindergarten is generally conceived by educators as a year of preparation for school. It is thought of as a year

in which small children, five or six years old, are prepared socially and emotionally for the academic learning which will take place over the next twelve years. It is expected that a foundation of behavior and attitudes will be laid in kindergarten on which the children can acquire the skills and knowledge they will be taught in the grades. A booklet prepared for parents by the staff of a suburban New York school system says that the kindergarten experience will stimulate the child's desire to learn and cultivate the skills he will need for learning in the rest of his school career. It claims that the child will find opportunities for physical growth, for satisfying his "need for self-expression," acquire some knowledge, and provide opportunities for creative activity. It concludes, "The most important benefit that your five-year-old will receive from kindergarten is the opportunity to live and grow happily and purposefully with others in a small society." The kindergarten teachers in one of the elementary schools in this community, one we shall call the Wilbur Wright School, said their goals were to see that the children "grew" in all ways: physically, of course, emotionally, socially, and academically. They said they wanted children to like school as a result of their kindergarten experiences and that they wanted them to learn to get along with others.

None of these goals, however, is unique to kindergarten; each of them is held to some extent by teachers in the other six grades at Wright School. And growth would occur, but differently, even if the child did not attend school. The children already know how to get along with others, in their families and their play groups. The unique job of the kindergarten in the educational division of labor seems rather to be teaching children the student role. The student role is the repertoire of behavior and attitudes regarded by educators as appropriate to children in school. Observation in the kindergartens of the Wilbur Wright School revealed a great variety of activities through which children are shown and then drilled in the behavior and attitudes defined as appropriate for school and thereby induced to learn the role of student. Observations of the kindergartens and interviews with the teachers both pointed to the teaching and learning of classroom routines as the main element of the student role. The teachers expended most of their efforts, for the first half of the year at least, in training the children to follow the routines which teachers created. The children were, in a very real sense, drilled in tasks and activities created by the teachers for their own purposes and beginning and ending quite arbitrarily (from the child's point of view) at the command of the teacher. One teacher remarked that she hated September, because during the first month "everything has to be done rigidly, and repeatedly, until they know exactly what they're supposed to do." However, "by January," she said, "they know exactly what to do [during the day] and I don't have to be after them all the time." Classroom routines were introduced gradually from the beginning of the year in all the kindergartens, and the children were drilled in them as long as was necessary to achieve regular compliance. By the end of the school year, the successful kindergarten teacher has a well-organized group of children. They follow classroom routines automatically, having learned all the command signals and the expected responses to them. They have, in our terms, learned the student role.

Training for Learning and for Life

The children [at the Wright School] learned to go through routines and to follow orders with unquestioning obedience, even when these make no sense to them. They have been disciplined to do as they are told by an authoritative person without significant protest. Edith Kerr [the teacher] has developed this discipline in the children by creating and enforcing a rigid social structure in the classroom through which she effectively controls the behavior of most of the children for most of the school day. The "living with others in a small society" which the school pamphlet tells parents is the most important thing the children will learn in kindergarten can be seen now in its operational meaning, which is learning to live by the routines imposed by the school. This learning appears to be the principal content of the student role.

Children who submit to school-imposed discipline and come to identify with it, so that being a "good student" comes to be an important part of their developing identities, become the good students by the school's definitions. Those who submit to the routines of the school but do not come to identify with them will be adequate students who find the more important part of their identities elsewhere, such as in the play group outside school. Children who refuse to submit to the school routines are rebels, who become known as "bad students" and often "problem children" in the school, for they do not learn the academic curriculum, and their behavior is often disruptive in the classroom. Today schools engage clinical psychologists in part to help teachers deal with such children.

[It is interesting to look at Edith Kerr's] kindergarten at Wright School [and] to ask how the children learn this role of student—come to accept school-imposed routines—and what, exactly, it involves in terms of behavior and attitudes. The most prominent features of the classroom are its physical and social structures. The room is carefully furnished and arranged in ways adults feel will interest children. The play store and play kitchen in the back of the room, for example, imply that children are interested in mimicking these activities of the adult world. The only space left for the children to create something of their own is the empty center of the room, and the materials at their disposal are the blocks, whose use causes anxiety on the part of the teacher. The room, being carefully organized physically by the adults, leaves little room for the creation of physical organization on the part of the children.

The social structure created by Edith is a far more powerful and subtle force for fitting the children to the student role. This structure is established by the very rigid and tightly controlled set of rituals and routines through which the children are put during the day. There is first the rigid "locating procedure" in which the children are asked to find themselves in terms of the month, date, day of the week, and the number of the class who are present and absent. This puts them solidly in the real world as defined by adults. The day is then divided into six periods whose activities are for the most part determined by the teacher. In Edith's kindergarten the children went through Serious Time, which opens the school day, Sharing Time, Play Time (which in clear weather would be spent outside), Work Time, Clean-up Time, after which they have their milk, and Rest Time after which they go home. The teacher has programmed activities for each of these times.

Occasionally the class is allowed limited discretion to choose between proffered activities, such as stories or records, but original ideas for activities are never solicited from them. Opportunity for free individual action is open only once in the day, during the part of Work Time left after the general class assignment has been completed (on the day reported, the class assignment was drawing animal pictures for the absent Mark). Spontaneous interests or observations from the children are never developed by the teacher. It seems that her schedule just does not allow room for developing such unplanned events. During Sharing Time, for example, the child who brought a bird's nest told Edith, in reply to her question of what kind of bird made it, "My friend says it's a rain bird." Edith does not think to ask about this bird, probably because the answer is "childish," that is, not given in accepted adult categories of birds. The children then express great interest in an object in the nest, but the teacher ignores this interest, probably because the object is uninteresting to her. The soldiers from "Babes in Toyland" strike a responsive note in the children, but this is not used for a discussion of any kind. The soldiers are treated in the same way as objects which bring little interest from the children. Finally, at the end of Sharing Time the child-world of perception literally erupts in the class with the recollection of "the spooky house" at the zoo. Apparently this made more of an impression on the children than did any of the animals, but Edith is unable to make any sense of it for herself. The tightly imposed order of the class begins to break down as the children discover a universe of discourse of their own and begin talking excitedly with one another. The teacher is effectively excluded from this child's world of perception and for a moment she fails to dominate the classroom situation. She reasserts control, however, by taking the children to the next activity she has planned for the day. It seems never to have occurred to Edith that there might be a meaningful learning experience for the children in re-creating the "spooky house" in the classroom. It seems fair to say that this would have offered an exercise in spontaneous self-expression and an opportunity for real creativity on the part of the children. Instead, they are taken through a canned animal imitation procedure, an activity which they apparently enjoy, but which is also imposed upon them rather than created by them.

While children's perceptions of the world and opportunities for genuine spontaneity and creativity are being systematically eliminated from the kindergarten, unquestioned obedience to authority and rote learning of meaningless material are being encouraged. When the children are called to line up in the center of the room they ask "Why?" and "What for?" as they are in the very process of complying. They have learned to go smoothly through a programmed day, regardless of whether parts of the program make any sense to them or not. Here the student role involves what might be called "doing what you're told and never mind why." Activities which might "make sense" to the children are effectively ruled out, and they are forced or induced to participate in activities which may be "senseless," such as calisthenics.

At the same time the children are being taught by rote meaningless sounds in the ritual oaths and songs, such as the Lord's Prayer, the Pledge to the Flag, and "America." As they go through the grades children learn more and more of the sounds of these ritual oaths, but the fact that they have often learned meaningless sounds rather than meaningful statements is shown when they are asked to write these out in the sixth grade; they write them as groups of sounds rather than as a series of words, according to the sixth grade teachers at Wright School. Probably much learning in the elementary grades is of this character, that is, having no intrinsic meaning to the children, but rather being tasks inexplicably required of them by authoritative adults.

Listening to sixth grade children read social studies reports, for example, in which they have copied material from encyclopedias about a particular country, an observer often gets the feeling that he is watching an activity which has no intrinsic meaning for the child. The child who reads, "Switzerland grows wheat and cows and grass and makes a lot of cheese" knows the dictionary meaning of each of these words but may very well have no conception at all of this "thing" called Switzerland. He is simply carrying out a task assigned by the teacher because it is assigned, and this may be its only "meaning" for him.

Another type of learning which takes place in kindergarten is seen in children who take advantage of the "holes" in the adult social structure to create activities of their own, during Work Time or out-of-doors during Play Time. Here the children are learning to carve out a small world of their own within the world created by adults. They very quickly learn that if they keep within permissible limits of noise and action they can play much as they please. Small groups of children formed during the year in Edith's kindergarten who played together at these times, developing semi-independent little groups in which they created their own worlds in the interstices of the adult-imposed physical and social world. These groups remind the sociological observer very much of the so-called "informal groups" which adults develop in factories and offices of large bureaucracies.[5] Here, too, within authoritatively imposed social organizations people find "holes" to create little subworlds which support informal, friendly, unofficial behavior. Forming and participating in such groups seems to be as much part of the student role as it is of the role of bureaucrat.

The kindergarten has been conceived of here as the year in which children are prepared for their schooling by learning the role of student. In the classrooms of the rest of the school grades, the children will be asked to submit to systems and routines imposed by the teachers and the curriculum. The days will be much like those of kindergarten, except that academic subjects will be substituted for the activities of the kindergarten. Once out of the school system, young adults will more than likely find themselves working in large-scale bureaucratic organizations, perhaps on the assembly line in the factory, perhaps in the paper routines of the white collar occupations, where they will be required to submit to rigid routines imposed by "the company" which may make little sense to them. Those who can operate well in this situation will be successful bureaucratic functionaries. Kindergarten, therefore, can be seen as preparing children not only for participation in the bureaucratic organization of large modern school systems, but also for the large-scale occupational bureaucracies of modern society.

Notes

1. Durkheim, É. (1956). *Sociology and education* (pp. 71–72). New York: Free Press.

2. Ibid., p. 123.

3. Brookover, W. (1957). *The sociology of education* (p. 4). New York: American Book.

4. Ibid., p. 6.

5. See, for example, Blau, P. M. (1956). *Bureaucracy in modern society* (Chapter 3). New York: Random House.

READING 16

Becoming a Gendered Body

Practices of Preschools

Karin A. Martin

Much of what happens in school occurs because of the informal organization. Yet beyond the formal organization of roles and the organization of the formal academic curriculum, schools exert an informal influence on those who inhabit them. These informal influences can be just as powerful as the formal influence of teachers and the academic curriculum. In this selection, Karin Martin illustrates some of the more subtle lessons learned in school—namely, the ways in which educational environments are a setting in which children learn gender. Delving into the world of the preschool, Martin uses her keen ethnographic eye to show how seemingly minute social interactions—focusing on play, the use of space, and regulation of voices—all contribute to the gendering of children's bodies. This intensely sociological look shows that much of what we take for granted—in this case, the sense that boys and girls are inherently different—is at least partially the result of ongoing social interactions.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Karin Martin published her research in 1998. Do you think her findings would be different if this research were replicated today?
2. Sociologists use different methods to arrive at their conclusions. How do you think Martin's research findings might be different if she had interviewed teachers, instead of observed their interactions?
3. What do you see as the long-term implications of the patterns that Martin documents in this piece?

Men and women in the United States … hold and move their bodies differently (Birdwhistell 1970; Henley 1977; Young 1990); these differences are sometimes related to sexuality (Haug 1987) and sometimes not. On the whole, men and women sit, stand, gesture, walk, and throw differently. Generally, women's bodies are confined, their movements restricted. For example, women take smaller steps than men, sit in closed positions (arms and legs crossed across the body), take up less physical space than men, do not step, twist, or throw from the shoulder when throwing a ball, and are generally tentative when using their bodies (Birdwhistell 1970; Henley 1977; Young 1990). Some of these differences, particularly differences in motor skills (e.g., jumping, running, throwing) are seen in early childhood (Thomas and French 1985). Of course, within gender, we may find individual differences, differences based on race, class, and sexuality, and differences based on size and shape of body. Yet, on average, men and women move differently.

From "Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools," by Karin A. Martin, *American Sociological Review*, *63*(August), pp. 494–511. Copyright 1998 by the American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

Such differences may seem trivial in the large scheme of gender inequality. However, theoretical work by social scientists and feminists suggests that these differences may be consequential. Bodies are (unfinished) resources (Shilling 1993:103) that must be "trained, manipulated, cajoled, coaxed, organized and in general disciplined" (Turner 1992:15). We use our bodies to construct our means of living, to take care of each other, to pleasure each other. According to Turner, "… social life depends upon the successful presenting, monitoring and interpreting of bodies" (p. 15). Similarly, according to Foucault (1979), controlled and disciplined bodies do more than regulate the individual body. A disciplined body creates a context for social relations. Gendered (along with "raced" and "classed") bodies create particular contexts for social relations as they signal, manage, and negotiate information about power and status… .

I suggest that the hidden school curriculum of disciplining the body is gendered and contributes to the embodiment of gender in childhood, making gendered bodies appear and feel natural… .

I suggest that this hidden curriculum that controls children's bodily practices serves also to turn kids who are similar in bodily comportment, movement, and practice into girls and boys, children whose bodily practices are different… .

Data and Method

The data for this study come from extensive and detailed semistructured field observations of five preschool classrooms of three- to five-year-olds in a midwestern city… .

A total 112 children and 14 different teachers (five head teachers and nine aides) were observed in these classrooms. All teachers were female. Forty-two percent of the kids were girls and 58 percent were boys, and they made up similar proportions in each classroom. There were 12 Asian or Asian American children, 3 Latino/a children, and 4 African American children. The remaining children were white. The children primarily came from middle-class families.

A research assistant and I observed in these classrooms about three times a week for eight months. Our observations were as unobtrusive as possible… .

Results

… Children are physically active, and institutions like schools impose disciplinary controls that regulate children's bodies and prepare children for the larger social world… . I examine how the following practices contribute to a gendering of children's bodies in preschool: the effects of dressing up or bodily adornment, the gendered nature of formal and relaxed behaviors, how the different restrictions on girls' and boys' voices limit their physicality, how teachers instruct girls' and boys' bodies, and the gendering of physical interactions between children and teachers and among the children themselves.

Bodily Adornment: Dressing Up

Perhaps the most explicit way that children's bodies become gendered is through their clothes and other bodily adornments. Here I discuss how parents gender their children through their clothes, how children's dress-up play experiments with making bodies feminine and masculine, and how this play, when it is gender normative, shapes girls' and boys' bodies differently, constraining girls' physicality.

Dressing up (1)

The clothes that parents send kids to preschool in shape children's experiences of their bodies in gendered ways. Clothes, particularly their color, signify a child's gender; gender in preschool is in fact color-coded. On average, about 61 percent of the girls wore pink clothing each day. Boys were more likely to wear primary colors, black, florescent green, and orange. Boys never wore pink.

> The teacher is asking each kid during circle (the part of the day that includes formal instruction by the teacher while the children sit in a circle) what their favorite color is. Adam says black. Bill says "every color that's not pink." (Five-year-olds)

Fourteen percent of three-year-old girls wore dresses each day compared to 32 percent of five-year-old girls. Wearing a dress limited girls' physicality in preschool. However, it is not only the dress itself, but knowledge about how to behave in a dress that is restrictive. Many girls already knew that some behaviors were not allowed in a dress. This knowledge probably comes from the families who dress their girls in dresses.

> Vicki, wearing leggings and a dress-like shirt, is leaning over the desk to look into a "tunnel" that some other kids have built. As she leans, her dress/shirt rides up exposing her back. Jennifer (another child) walks by Vicki and as she does she pulls Vicki's shirt back over her bare skin and gives it a pat to keep it in place. It looks very much like something one's mother might do. (Five-year-olds) …

Dresses are restrictive in other ways as well. They often are worn with tights that are experienced as uncomfortable and constraining. I observed girls constantly pulling at and rearranging their tights, trying to

untwist them or pull them up. Because of their discomfort, girls spent much time attuned to and arranging their clothing and/or their bodies… .

Teachers, however, lifted up girls' dresses frequently—to see if a child was dressed warmly enough, while reading a book about dresses, to see if a child was wet. Usually this was done without asking the child and was more management of the child rather than an interaction with her. Teachers were much more likely to manage girls and their clothing this way—rearranging their clothes, tucking in their shirts, fixing a ponytail gone astray. Such management often puts girls' bodies under the control of another and calls girls' attentions to their appearances and bodily adornments… .

Formal and Relaxed Behaviors

… I identified several behaviors that were expected by the teachers, required by the institution, or that would be required in many institutional settings, as formal behavior. Raising one's hand, sitting "on your bottom" (not on your knees, not squatting, not lying down, not standing) during circle, covering one's nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, or sitting upright in a chair are all formal behaviors of preschools, schools, and to some extent the larger social world. Crawling on the floor, yelling, lying down during teachers' presentations, and running through the classroom are examples of relaxed behaviors that are not allowed in preschool, schools, work settings, and many institutions of the larger social world (Henley 1977)… .

In the classrooms in this study, boys were allowed and encouraged to pursue relaxed behaviors in a variety of ways that girls were not. Girls were more likely to be encouraged to pursue more formal behaviors. Eighty-two percent of all formal behaviors observed in these classrooms were done by girls, and only 18 percent by boys. However, 80 percent of the behaviors coded as relaxed were boys' behaviors (Table 16.1).

These observations do not tell us *why* boys do more relaxed behaviors and girls do more formal behaviors. Certainly many parents and others would argue that boys are more predisposed to sloppy postures, crawling on the floor, and so on. However, my observations suggest that teachers help construct this gender difference in bodily behaviors. Teachers were more likely to reprimand girls for relaxed bodily movements and comportment. Sadker and Sadker (1994) found a similar result with respect to hand-raising for answering teachers' questions—if hand raising is considered a formal behavior and calling out a relaxed behavior, they find that boys are more likely to call out without raising their hands and demand attention… .

Table 16.1 Observations of Formal and Relaxed Behaviors, by Gender of Child: Five Preschool Classrooms

	Boys		*Girls*		*Total*	
Type of Behavior	*N*	*Percent*	*N*	*Percent*	*N*	*Percent*
Formal	16	18	71	82	87	100
Relaxed	86	80	21	20	107	100

Note: Structured/formal behaviors were coded from references in the field notes to formal postures, polite gestures, etc. Relaxed/informal behaviors were coded from references to informal postures, backstage demeanors, etc.

This gendered dynamic of hand-raising exists even in preschool, although our field notes do not provide enough systematic recording of hand-raising to fully assess it. However, such a dynamic applies to many bodily movements and comportment.

> The kids are sitting with their legs folded in a circle listening to Jane (the teacher) talk about dinosaurs. ("Circle" is the most formal part of their preschool education each day and is like sitting in class.) Sam has the ballet slippers on his hands and is clapping them together really loudly. He stops and does a half-somersault backward out of the circle and stays that way with his legs in the air. Jane says nothing and continues talking about dinosaurs. Sue, who is sitting next to Sam, pushes his leg out of her way. Sam sits up and is now busy trying to put the ballet shoes on over his sneakers, and he is looking at the other kids and laughing, trying to get a reaction. He is clearly not paying attention to Jane's dinosaur story and is distracting the other kids. Sam takes the shoes and claps them together again. Jane leans over and tells him to give her the shoes. Sam does, and then lies down all stretched out on the floor, arms over his head, legs apart. Adam is also lying down now, and Keith is on Sara's (the teacher's aide) lap. Rachel takes her sweater off and folds it up. The other children are focused on the teacher. After about five minutes, Jane tells Sam "I'm going to ask you to sit up." (She doesn't say anything to Adam.) But he doesn't move. Jane ignores Sam and Adam and continues with the lesson. Rachel now lies down on her back. After about ten seconds Jane says, "Sit up, Rachel." Rachel sits up and listens to what kind of painting the class will do today. (Five-year-olds)

Sam's behavior had to be more disruptive, extensive, and informal than Rachel's for the teacher to instruct him and his bodily movements to be quieter and for him to comport his body properly for circle. Note that the boys who were relaxed but not disruptive were not instructed to sit properly. It was also common for a teacher to tell a boy to stop some bodily behavior and for the boy to ignore the request and the teacher not to enforce her instructions, although she frequently repeated them… .

Events like these that happen on a regular basis over an extended period of early childhood serve to gender children's bodies—boys come to take up more room with their bodies, to sit in more open positions, and to feel freer to do what they wish with their bodies, even in relatively formal settings… .

Controlling Voice

… Voice is an aspect of bodily experience that teachers and schools are interested in disciplining. Quiet appears to be required for learning in classrooms. Teaching appropriate levels of voice, noise, and sound disciplines children's bodies and prepares them "from the inside" to learn the school's curriculums and to participate in other social institutions.

The disciplining of children's voices is gendered. I found that girls were told to be quiet or to repeat a request

in a quieter, "nicer" voice about three times more often than were boys (see Table 16.2). This finding is particularly interesting because boys' play was frequently much noisier. However, when boys were noisy, they were also often doing other behaviors the teacher did not allow, and perhaps the teachers focused less on voice because they were more concerned with stopping behaviors like throwing or running.

Additionally, when boys were told to "quiet down" they were told in large groups, rarely as individuals. When they were being loud and were told to be quiet, boys were often in the process of enacting what Jordan and Cowan (1995) call warrior narratives:

> A group of three boys is playing with wooden doll figures. The dolls are jumping off block towers, crashing into each other. Kevin declares loudly, "I'm the grown up." Keith replies, "I'm the police." They knock the figures into each other and push each other away. Phil grabs a figure from Keith. Keith picks up two more and bats one with the other toward Phil. Now all three boys are crashing the figures into each other, making them dive off towers. They're having high fun. Two more boys join the group. There are now five boys playing with the wooden dolls and the blocks. They're breaking block buildings; things are crashing; they're grabbing each other's figures and yelling loudly. Some are yelling "fire, fire" as their figures jump off the block tower. The room is very noisy. (Five-year-olds)

Girls as individuals and in groups were frequently told to lower their voices. Later that same afternoon:

> During snack time the teacher asks the kids to tell her what they like best in the snack mix. Hillary says, "Marshmallows!" loudly, vigorously, and with a swing of her arm. The teacher turns to her and says, "I'm going to ask you to say that quietly," and Hillary repeats it in a softer voice. (Five-year-olds)

Table 16.2
Observations of Teachers Telling Children to Be Quiet, by Gender of Child: Five Preschool Classrooms

Gender	*N*	*Percent*
Girls	45	73
Boys	16	26

Total	61	100

Note: Coded from references in the field notes to instances of teachers quieting children's voices.

These two observations represent a prominent pattern in the data. The boys playing with the wooden figures were allowed to express their fun and enthusiasm loudly whereas Hillary could not loudly express her love of marshmallows. Girls' voices are disciplined to be softer and in many ways less physical—toning down their voices tones down their physicality… .

Physical Interaction Between Teachers and Children

Teachers also physically directed kids. For example, teachers often held kids to make them stop running, tapped them to make them turn around and pay attention, or turned their faces toward them so that they would listen to verbal instructions… .

Physical interaction between teachers and children was coded into three categories: positive, negative, or neutral. Physical interaction was coded as positive if it was comforting, helpful, playful, or gentle. It was coded as negative if it was disciplining, assertive (not gentle), restraining, or clearly unwanted by the child (e.g., the child pulled away). Physical interaction was coded as neutral if it seemed to have little content (e.g., shoulders touching during circle, legs touching while a teacher gave a group of kids directions for a project). About one-half of the time, when teachers touched boys or girls, it was positive… . For girls, the remaining physical interactions included 15 percent that were disciplining or instructing the body and about one-third that were neutral (e.g., leaning over the teacher's arm while looking at a book). For boys, these figures were reversed: Only 4 percent of their physical interactions with teachers were neutral in content, and 35 percent were negative and usually included explicit disciplining and instructing of the body.

This disciplining of boys' bodies took a particular form. Teachers usually attempted to restrain or remove boys who had "gone too far" in their play or who had done something that could harm another child:

> Irving goes up to Jack, who is playing dress-up, and puts his arms up, makes a monster face and says, "Aaarhhh!" Jack looks startled. Irving runs and jumps in front of Jack again and says "Aaaarrhh!" again. Marie (teacher) comes from behind Irving and holds him by the shoulders and arms from behind. She bends over him and says, "Calm down." He pulls forward, and eventually she lets him go. He runs up to Jack again and growls. Marie says, "He doesn't want you to do that." (Three-year-olds)

> Jane (teacher) tells Jeff to pick up the blocks. He says, "I won't." She catches him and pulls him toward her by the arm. She holds him by the arm. He struggles and gets away. He jumps up and down. Other kids put the blocks away. Jane ignores Jeff. (Several minutes later:) Jeff has been throwing the blocks and now Jane pries the blocks from him and grabs him by the wrist and drags him away from the blocks by his shirt arm. He is looking up at her and pointing his finger at her and saying, "No, cut it out!" in a mocking tone. Jane is angry, but she talks to him calmly but sternly telling him he can't throw the blocks. Jeff is struggling the entire time. Jane lets go of his arm, and

> Jeff runs right back to the block area and walks on the blocks that are still on the floor. (Five-year-olds)

As Serbin (1983) suggests, frequent loud reprimands of boys may increase their disruptive behavior; more frequent physical disciplining interactions between teachers and boys may do so as well. Because boys more frequently than girls experienced interactions in which their bodies were physically restrained or disciplined by an adult who had more power and was angry, they may be more likely than girls to associate physical interaction with struggle and anger, and thus may be more likely to be aggressive or disruptive… .

Conclusion

… Men and women and girls and boys fill social space with their bodies in different ways. Our everyday movements, postures, and gestures are gendered. These bodily differences enhance the seeming naturalness of sexual and reproductive differences, that then construct inequality between men and women (Butler 1990). As MacKinnon (1987) notes, "Differences are inequality's post hoc excuse …" (p. 8). In other words, these differences create a context for social relations in which differences confirm inequalities of power.

This research suggests one way that bodies are gendered and physical differences are constructed through social institutions and their practices. Because this gendering occurs at an early age, the seeming naturalness of such differences is further underscored. In preschool, bodies become gendered in ways that are so subtle and taken-for-granted that they come to feel and appear natural. Preschool, however, is presumably just the tip of the iceberg in the gendering of children's bodies. Families, formal schooling, and other institutions (like churches, hospitals, and workplaces) gender children's physicality as well… .

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READING 17

"Why Can't We Learn About This?"

Sexual Minority Students Navigate the Official and Hidden Curricular Spaces of High School

Ingrid E. Castro and Mark Conor Sujak

This article applies the concept of the hidden curriculum and the informal lessons of school to the case of sexual minority youth—those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, transgender, or asexual (LGBTQA). The authors conducted in-depth interviews with a small number of Hispanic youth who self-identified as homosexuals (two who identified as lesbians and four homosexual males) at a school they called Theta High School, located in a working-class suburb near a large metropolitan area. Their data also incorporate the accounts of teachers, counselors, a social worker, and a nurse. Castro and Sujak show that the heteronormative context of the school has implications for the social and academic well-being of sexual minority youth. Whether it was through the curriculum, the range of social supports, or normative institutional arrangements and rituals like prom and homecoming, schools are a place where students—both straight and gay—learn lessons about social inclusion and identity.

Questions to consider for the reading:

1. Within the context of this article, what is the hidden curriculum?
2. How does the hidden curriculum shape the three aspects of formal curriculum—classrooms, groups, and relationships—discussed in this reading?
3. Moving beyond this reading, how might hidden curriculum affect the educational experiences of other types of students in school (racial and ethnic minorities, working-class students, or students with disabilities)?

High school can be a place riddled with complications pertaining to adolescent development, sometimes emotionally and physically indicated by embarrassment and awkwardness as teenagers discover themselves among their peers. Most of these uncomfortable moments arise from the awakening of sexuality that occurs during adolescence (Reynolds & Koski, 1995). While managing their new-found desires, adolescents in the United States must also prepare for their futures by means of attaining an education, with schools acting as "important socializing institutions that prepare adolescents for adult roles and postsecondary education" (Pearson, Miller, & Wilkinson, 2007, p. 523). Sexual minority youth have been referred to as the "invisible minority of the adolescent population" (Nichols, 1999). We argue that while these youth may be unseen within their age groups, they are perhaps even more invisible within their high schools, particularly when considering the hidden (informal) curriculum that is applied to the more established, recognized, and formal academic, campus, and social curriculums present within educational environments. In fact, these milieus may be intricately related; Nichols (1999) links the heterosexualized content of high schools to the lack of validation of feelings, identities, and behaviors of sexual minority youth.

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To date, there have been very few studies examining the educational experiences of sexual minorities in high school, and even less considering sexual minorities' dating practices during adolescence (Elze, 2003; Eyre, Milbrath, & Peacock, 2007). For sexual minority students, their educational institutions, as well as many other dominant social structures such as work, family, and peer groups, operate under presumed heterosexuality: the system's—in this case, their schools'—inability to recognize differences in sexuality (Epstein & Johnson, 1994). Due to the fact that most sexual minority students have previously internalized the cultural norms of heterosexuality, they are socially differentiated from their heterosexual peers as they develop an understanding of their sexual identity. This separate, and sometimes unequal, position dictates that sexual minority students may at times feel deviant in comparison with their heterosexual classmates. Realizing their non-heterosexual identities amidst high school cultural norms of "straight" can lead to internalized homophobia, perceived stigmatization, and discrimination and violence—factors that lead to stress in homosexuals, often at significant levels (Meyer, 1995). All of these components ultimately place sexual minority students at a disadvantage in educational environments… .

Though sexuality is often a topic many Americans generally feel should be addressed in the home and not at school, it can often be more difficult to address within students' families. Research conducted by Flowers and Buston (2001) indicates that social support for sexual minority youth is often hard to find at home. For racial minority groups, there is often a commonality that is found within the home based on minority cultures or values; if someone from an ethnic minority, for example, gets made fun of at school because of heritage, cultural indicators, or appearance, he or she can potentially find comfort in the family since another member has most likely had a similar experience. These commonalities help affirm minority culture and reduce minority stress. For sexual minority students, however, there is usually no figure in the family or community who is forthcoming in reference to sexual orientation. Students rarely find someone to converse with in the home about their sexual desires, and fears of rejection from families could alienate them further from their immediate and surrounding communities. For many, therefore, educational institutions serve as important resources in the lives of sexual minority students, and often play an integral role in identity development.

Inclusion of topics relating to homosexuality in high school academic curriculums is, to date, rare. When present, the information is often missing appropriate contextualization and therefore taught incorrectly, in unbalanced and hurtful ways (Macgillivray, 2000). There are a variety of reasons for this dearth of information, including state/school district legal restrictions, personal decisions and beliefs made by educators/school personnel, community/family opinions, and school-specific official/unofficial curriculum guidelines. Schneider and Owens (2000) argue that educational institutions need to teach openness, respect, and appreciation of differences/ similarities in order to provide a supportive and embracing community for all students… .

The role educational institutions may serve in the development of students' sexual identity formation is

enacted through the role of the hidden curriculum. Hidden curriculum is defined as:

> [T]he unofficial rules, routines, and structures of schools through which students learn behaviors, values, beliefs, and attitudes. Elements of the hidden curriculum do not appear in the schools' written goals, formal lesson plans, or learning objectives although they may reflect culturally dominant social values and ideas about what schools should teach. (Ritzer, 2007, p. 2116)

Ritzer (2007) continues to explain "through the hidden curriculum, students get the message that middle and upper class cultural values, norms, and attitudes are the standard by which all else is measured" and schools reward those who conform to these standards. The hidden (informal) curriculum in high schools includes teacher expectations, peer social networks, and other variables that include academic and social lessons for all students (Nichols, 1999).

The hidden curriculum is expanded by Epstein (1995) to include students as active agents in their own development, depending on themselves and their peers, as much as the school, in the social construction and personal understanding of experiences. Students in high school report gay-based slurs and harassment occur frequently and for males is considered the most "disturbing" form of harassment, and for sexual minority students school-based peer victimization is connected with high levels of school truancy and dropout rates, suicide, drug use, and running away (Birkett, Eselage, & Koenig, 2009; Elze, 2003; Lipkin, 1999; Ngo, 2003; Nichols, 1999; Pascoe, 2007; Williams, Connolly, Pepler, & Craig, 2005). Current estimates indicate as many as 40% to 50% of teen runaways are sexual minorities (Campos, 2005). Leading up to this number, recent surveys and studies have found that homosexual students have a truancy rate between 30% and 40%, and while the national high school dropout rate for all adolescents is 11%, the average for sexual minority teens is between 26% and 28% (Campos, 2005; Macgillivray, 2000). We must explore the reasons why sexual minorities are more than twice as likely to drop out of high school in comparison to heterosexual teens. Since harassment based on sexual identity often originates from the school-based peers of sexual minority students, peer groups remain "an important context to be examined when considering prevention and intervention efforts" (Williams et al., 2005, p. 480). The hidden curriculum of high schools not only includes the ways sexual minority students are ignored within the classroom, campus, and social aspects of school, but conversely the ways in which they are sometimes negatively highlighted through peer exclusion.

In the present argument, the term hidden curriculum will be expanded to include how students play an active role in the construction of the school's values through their interactions with teachers, faculty, and other school administrators. We will be examining how heteronormative hidden curriculum is present within the following three spaces: classrooms (academic curriculum), groups (campus curriculum), and relationships (social curriculum). By focusing on the cycle between student action, faculty and administrative inaction (or improper action), and student response, the present research uncovers how this cycle holds an even stronger negative connotation for homosexual youth while it is disseminated among all school members. This cycle directly affects school space and its climate, eventually leading to negative socioeducational experiences and outcomes for sexual minority students… .

Results

Academic Curriculum: Classroom

A positive, supportive environment where a student feels represented and noticed is undoubtedly the ideal situation for any student, yet sexual minority students are underrepresented, undersupported, and unnoticed. When asked about a time when homosexuality was academically presented in their high school setting, none of the participants could remember it being mentioned in a class. After some consideration, Cassandra remembered once, in history class, there was a story about a lesbian in the army, but it was brief. Otherwise, there were no mentions of homosexuality or homosexuals in any context while the interviewees were in classes at Theta High School. Lipkin (1999) explains that "although teachers might draw attention to the links among other prejudices, they often see homophobia as separate, unrelated, and beyond the scope of the K–12 syllabus" (p. 3). This missing academic content is not very surprising given that while there have been recent suggestions that the high school literary canon should include nonmajority perspectives, there have been school censorship cases reported in states across the nation in reaction to efforts of homosexual content curriculum inclusion (e.g., see Lipkin, 1999). In her study of sexual minority youth in New England, Elze (2003) found that while the majority of the adolescents felt surrounded by supportive and caring school faculty and professionals, over half of the same students indicated that none of their courses or school guest speakers included homosexual content.

Alfredo expressed his agitation with the lack of alternate images and perspectives in school. He felt that when he "came out"—self-identified as a homosexual male—to many of his friends they displayed a double standard, whereby they were accepting of him, but not of other homosexual students.

He felt that his friends were not knowledgeable enough about homosexuality: "I think that is why it is always important to teach at some level about the culture. We learn about all different cultures around the world, why can't we learn about this?" Alfredo's insistence on the importance of homosexuality's representation in the curriculum reflected his understanding of social relations, specifically those with his heterosexual friends. If his friends could accept him as a homosexual because they had a personal connection and increased knowledge of the lifestyle, representation in the classroom might have the same effect on other students who might not understand homosexuality and/or be less accepting of identity differences.

One of the school's counselors stated that Theta High School is a welcoming environment, but merely in the last few years. Prior to this newfound positive environment, she recalled a very different type of school space:

> I will never forget an in-service workshop we had one day within my first years. A group, PFLAG [Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays], was coming in to discuss their involvement in the community, the resources they offer, etc. A couple of my colleagues refused to attend, saying they don't agree with homosexuality and they're not going to have it shoved down their throats. To watch them respond in that way made me wonder how they would respond to a student who may come to them… .

Though this example cannot predict how those colleagues who refused the in-service training interact with homosexual students at school, it is probable that due to their lack of attendance, teachers and other school faculty provide students with information that may be out of date or not aligned with current practices in supporting sexual minority students on campus.

Though the definition of the hidden curriculum states that it does not manifest itself in overt, official curriculum of schools in terms of homosexuality, the intrinsic nature of hidden curriculum to represent culturally dominant social values makes it nearly impossible to separate the hidden from the official curriculum. Even as curriculum design is becoming "stricter" and, in recent years, more closely monitored by local and state governments in primary and secondary schools, teachers at Theta High School are generally afforded the opportunity to choose what and how they teach. The fact that in all 4 years of high school only one participant could recall an instance of homosexuality being academically discussed in a class reflects the cultural values of most teachers and suggests a belief that presenting students with representations of homosexuality is not a teacher's responsibility and unimportant to the educational process.

Since it is not in the official academic curriculum of most schools, unlike curricular representations of ethnic or racial minorities, discussions of homosexuality fall to the wills of teachers in determining the level of representation homosexuality will have in their classrooms. This is a clear example of how the hidden curriculum bleeds into the overt curriculum, causing a lack of visibility, understanding, and representation of sexual minority perspectives… . Teachers believe including sexual minority themes in high school curriculums would be difficult without adequate direction or resources from the school, given that teachers believe that they have not received adequate training on how to address issues related to sexual minorities in the classroom or curriculum (Ngo, 2003). In addition, such training is necessary because Ngo (2003) found that teachers often worry that they do not know the "right way" to introduce homosexual themes in the classroom due to a fear of "trivializing" the material or being "inauthentic," therefore deciding to leave the material out of their classroom curriculums because teachers are "stuck" in a certain way of thinking about what "constitutes good teaching."

Campus Curriculum: Groups

When asked about the ways Theta represents homosexual students, or what services were available to homosexual students, all students produced the name of the LGBT group on campus. For a while, the LGBT group was without a faculty sponsor, and thus without a place to meet. One teacher, who was asked by a student to sponsor the club, explained the homophobia present within Theta High School's faculty:

> When she first approached me about sponsoring this club, I turned her down because I had been so busy at the time. After asking several other teachers to be sponsors, she came to me desperate for a sponsor. I was appalled when she told me that most of the teachers she approached claimed that they were afraid to sponsor such a club because they didn't want to be mistaken for the possibility of being gay.

Eventually, the teacher took over as sponsor for the club because of the persistence of this particular student… .

At the time of the interviews, both of the club sponsors were heterosexual teachers. The club discusses controversies linked to homosexuality and sponsors a variety of events, most recently the Day of Silence—a yearly event supported by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN; 2008) that brings attention to "anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment and effective responses" through students and faculty, gay, and straight allies, not speaking for one day ("Truth about the Day," 2011).

A recent Day of Silence was reported as a success by a few of the teachers who participated in this study. Approximately 20% of enrolled students and 5% of faculty at Theta participated; student numbers suggest significant support from heterosexual students for the event, but faculty numbers do not… . The LGBT club sponsor was shocked by the stories she heard upon taking over the club: "One of the problems that actually surprised me the most about these students is the unsettling number of times that our students have felt that they were discriminated against by their teachers." Some teachers vocally disapproved of other teachers participating in the Day of Silence, and others teachers were unsupportive of students who participated. Cassandra related an encounter with one of her teachers on the Day of Silence, which reflects reverse discrimination sentiments held by some of Theta's faculty… .

LGBT groups offer significant advantages for students, with research showing that many students see them as a crucial place to feel safe and create social networks, but the existence of the group is not enough to provide complete support for sexual minority students (Pascoe, 2007).

In addition to the group's limitations in the arena of sanctioned social support, Bob and Anastacio suggested that the group continues to have low visibility within the school. Some students and faculty believe that the group does not change the image of gay students at Theta High School. Cassandra offered insight into the lack of student membership in the group: "We don't have that many people because not a lot of kids want to come out, or, like, if their friends see that they are in the club, or if they are straight, their friends will think that they are gay." Akin to the teacher's experience with her faculty peers not wanting to be the club's sponsor, Cassandra found similar homophobic reasons for why her school peers do not join the club. Due to public events and group meetings, whereby nongroup peers might identify students as homosexual regardless of their sexual orientations, participation in LGBT is often stigmatized among Theta High School's student body. Anastacio suggested that a minimal amount of students are associated with the club, and those kids are "out to the extreme." He also stated that club membership is skewed, because most members are lesbians, not gay males or other straight ally students… . The imbalance in club membership is consistent with studies that find male sexual minority youth have significantly higher emotional risks and lower academic performance than female sexual minority youth (Almeida, Johnson, Corliss, Molnar, & Azrael, 2009; Busseri, Willoughby, Chalmers, & Bogaert, 2006; Pearson et al., 2007; Russell, Sief, & Truong, 2001). The larger commonality in the responses between both faculty and student participants in this study was the acknowledgement that lesbian students are very visible, but homosexual male students continue to be underrepresented, within the public areas of Theta High School.

Besides the LGBT club, there is one other school support option available, which is specifically designed for sexual minority students. According to the school social worker, "An assistant principal, dean, counselor or social worker can bring the name of a homosexual student forward if the individual feels that the student needs more assistance to be academically successful." If enough sexual minority students are identified as academically struggling, a support group can be formed. Support groups can meet during the school day or after school hours and are led by someone with training to address the needs of sexual minority students… . Unfortunately, this type of group formation requires students to self-identity as homosexual to a faculty member at Theta High School, which, as faculty and student participants suggested, is significantly more difficult for male students than female students. In addition, the process whereby a faculty member then informs a school administrator of a student's sexual identity can be tantamount to "outing" the student to the educational community, taking away the student's power to claim and take ownership of his or her sexual identity.

In the case of support, the appearance of the hidden curriculum is quite the opposite of the other two main focuses of this study. Theta High School provided additional support services to sexual minority students, though only if students struggled academically because of their sexual orientation, a reactionary policy dependent on self-reporting academic stress, as well as self-identifying as a homosexual to the school's administration. Since sexual minority youth often feel withdrawn from their educational communities and are afraid of rejection by school authorities (Pearson et al., 2007), students may not openly discuss their academic struggles because of issues tied to their sexuality. In addition, students may not realize the problems they are having in school are tied to emotional and relational stressors surrounding an open expression of their sexual identities within high school. In this case, the lack of participation on the part of sexual minority students to request help justifies the school's lack of support, and concurrently reveals the heteronormative hidden curriculum within the structure of school support services.

The participants in this study also acknowledged that there were no assemblies or programs for students within the school that promoted tolerance or acceptance of homosexuality, though there were school-sponsored events, assemblies, and programs for other minority groups, exemplifying the choice to exclude—or fail to include—programming aimed at lowering homophobia and heterosexism in Theta High School. Faculty participants recognized only a handful of school in-service learning programs or other continuing education opportunities to assist in lowering homophobia, raising awareness, and/or expanding student services and support among faculty and administration. Even when these types of diversity programs were available, attendance by faculty and administration was not mandatory and, therefore, easily avoidable; a policy which, once again, served to support the hidden curriculum of Theta High School.

Social Curriculum: Relationships

Participation in romantic relationships assists students in developing their sexual identities in tandem with learning valuable relationship skills. Savin-Williams (1998) suggests that committed relationships help "adolescents learn how to relate to another and to experiment in associating intimacy needs with sexuality" to "further clarify who they are and what they desire" (p. 159). For sexual minority youth there are not as many

options for connecting romantically with students within their schools as there are for their heterosexual peers. In addition, sexual minority youth may not have anyone to consult with as they reach sexual milestones such as first crush, first kiss, or first date, which is directly opposite of heterosexual students who have their heterosexual peers to use as sounding boards and talking outlets (Campos, 2005). At a crucial time when identity formation is linked with adolescent sexual discovery, sexual minority students usually cannot find someone within their school (primarily heterosexual) social networks to date. Most of the adolescent participants in this study cited either friends or family as sources of helping to find possible romantic partners, or utilizing currently popular Internet networking websites such as myspace.com, facebook.com, or match.com. In the digital age, use of such networking websites has become a predominant resource for meeting potential romantic partners.

With the lack of easily identifiable same age people to date, many sexual minority teens look for partners older than themselves. In a study conducted by Savin-Williams (1998), 70% of homosexual male participants reported that their first relationship was with a man older than themselves, and Bauermeister et al. (2010) found that over half of the students in their study of sexual minority adolescents, both male and female, were romantically involved with someone older than them. Eyre et al. (2007) also found that all of the sexual minority adolescent participants in their study had romantic partners older than them by an average of 3.43 years, for which a number of reasons were given including the fact that older men were able to offer the teens a "model of adjustment that the younger partner may not yet have achieved" (p. 119). In Savin-Williams' (1998) study, 20% of the respondents had partners more than 7 years their senior, with the extreme being a 30-year difference… .

Another obstacle for teenage homosexual relationships: the views of their parents. Of the six student participants, at the time of the interview only two had revealed their sexuality to their parents, though they all self-identified as homosexual in school… .

Many students observed a difference between how heterosexual and homosexual students meet their dating partners. Alex stated: "It's a lot different because heterosexual guys or girls could just, like, go outside of the door and they will see a lot of people and, it's like, for a homosexual guy or girl, it is like a treasure hunt; you have to go around and look." Julia gave a similar perspective on this topic, referring to her "gaydar"—her perceived ability to detect other homosexuals around her: "If you know, you just approach them. Simple question. Then you just start to get to know them just like anybody else. Heterosexual couples, they just right aware flirt and try to, like, seduce them in a way." She later expressed caution, as did some of the other participants, about approaching a stranger. Most participants held at least a mild fear of a potentially dangerous reaction given by a heterosexual student if approached in a way that expressed romantic interest. This self-monitoring of interpersonal interactions often occurs for sexual minority adolescents due to fears of harassment (Savin-Williams, 2007). As such, most students looked for some kind of identifier, such as a rainbow ribbon or bracelet, to act as an icebreaker before romantically approaching someone new. The rainbow, an image commonly linked to the LGBT community, when worn is an example of what are known as clothing "tie-symbols," often adopted by younger populations as visual expressions that allow "like to find like" (Rubinstein, 2001). Rainbows can signify that someone is either a homosexual or an ally. In this way, a

rainbow marker does not guarantee a particular person is a potential partner, but it does provide a minimal guarantee that a negative reaction is unlikely, making it easier for the student to approach the person wearing the rainbow… .

While the awakening of sexual desires, either heterosexual or homosexual, is a key factor in adolescent growth that aides in the development of building strong, emotional bonds (Savin-Williams, 1998), most research omits the topic of dating choice among school-aged sexual minorities. Many teens begin dating in high school, if not sooner, and start to develop a type of résumé pertaining to the characteristics they look for in a dating partner. Though it is not the implicit desire or responsibility of schools to facilitate relationships among students, it nevertheless happens within the social curriculum and is supported by schools in the form of dances and other social functions that suggest heterosexual pairing. Macgillivray (2000) states that high schools directly reinforce heterosexuality (and ignore homosexuality) through pervasive representation and support of heterosexual relationships and rituals, thereby excluding sexual minority students from fully participating in a variety of aspects within school… .

Since dating among the heterosexual population of coeducational high schools is not separated from the school environment, the interplay between student dating and school approval creates a structure whereby the hidden curriculum supports heterosexual dating. Therefore, if the function of a school does not involve providing an environment that supports dating amongst sexual minority students, a double standard is established by school administrations that affects both heterosexual and homosexual students. This exclusion is particularly alarming given that one of the 13 fears identified by sexual minority students in Sanelli and Perreault's (2001) study was "fear of never finding anyone" to love (other fears mentioned by students included discrimination, harassment, loss of family and friends, substance addiction, isolation, and death).

For many of the students in this study, finding someone to date within Theta High School was quite difficult. Since the LGBT group self-reports low attendance numbers, and half the students in this study were not members to begin with, the group itself did not provide a comprehensive environment for dating possibilities, yet it is the only student group option that exists for sexual minority students to meet and get to know one another within school grounds. Many other student clubs exist in high schools, which function to attract students based on interests. Since these clubs primarily consist of heterosexually identified male and female students, the interests that attract them to the club provide a basis for relationships to bloom. In this manner, Theta High School provides many options for heterosexual couples to meet, which is reflected in the commentary by many of the student and faculty participants in this study that heterosexual couples need to "just look around them" to find numerous possible dating partners. For homosexual students, the task of dating is daunting, given the narrower pool from which to choose and fears of misidentifying the sexual orientation of school peers. Many resort to online dating services, but those too can be stigmatized, portraying the students who use them as unable to find partners because of flaws in themselves rather than a lack of visibility and availability within Theta High School… .

Conclusion

During the course of this research, the unmistakable presence of a hidden curriculum in the more official academic, campus, and social curriculums became entirely clear. By and large, it has taken hold in keeping the social status of sexual minority students static, though there has been an "apparent" increase in the acceptance of homosexuality at Theta High School… .

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READING 18

Academic Learning + Socioemotional Learning = National Priority

Roger P. Weissberg and Jason Cascarino

As illustrated by all of the readings in this chapter, students learn many lessons through the formal and informal organization of schools. Students absorb a formal curriculum composed of the "three Rs," they acquire civic literacy and are socialized to have a sense of discipline and fit into a larger group, and they learn lessons about their core identities. In this selection, Roger P. Weissberg and Jason Cascarino pose a question about what interactional and emotional competencies we want students to graduate from high school with and how those competencies can be taught. These researchers and advocates return to a central observation of educational researchers: that schools are fundamentally social places. As such, they have an important part to play in assisting students in their socioemotional learning and ensuring that students graduate with an ability to solve problems, manage conflict, and communicate effectively.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. How do you think supporters of standardized testing and accountability in schools would respond to Weissberg and Cascarino's proposal that schools should make socioemotional learning a national priority?
2. Based on this reading, where and how should socioemotional learning be integrated into the school curriculum? Should content be presented in a stand-alone class or woven throughout the academic curriculum?
3. To what extent do you think the need for or the structure of lessons on socioemotional learning vary across schools and their diverse populations?

Mr. Jenkins thought he had taught a great problem-solving lesson to his 5th-grade class. He posed hypothetical social situations, and students conversed animatedly in small groups as they generated alternative solutions. However, at the end of the period, Tamika approached him and asked, "Mr, Jenkins, does problem-solving work in real life?"

From "Academic Learning + Social-Emotional Learning = National Priority," by R. P. Weissberg and J. Cascarino. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(2), pp. 8–13. Copyright 2013 by Phi Delta Kappa International. Reprinted with permission.

Mr. Jenkins asked Tamika if she was upset about something. She told him her two best friends from elementary school no longer spoke to each other, and she didn't know who to sit next to at lunch. Mr. Jenkins encouraged Tamika to think of different ways she might handle the situation. Tamika came up with several strategies and decided on one to try. Mr. Jenkins encouraged her to let him know how things turned out.

Every day students experience real-life situations like Tamika's that can affect their learning and well-being as well as the learning and well-being of their classmates. This reality raises important questions about what competencies schools should promote and how educators and students can relate most effectively and

constructively with each other.

What do we want children to know and be able to do when they graduate from high school? How can we organize communities to ensure that all students reach these stated learning goals? Educators, families, students, policy makers, researchers, and child advocates are working to provide practical, evidence-based answers to these questions.

High-quality schools ensure that all students master reading, math, writing, science, history, foreign languages, and the arts. In addition to graduating academically proficient students who are culturally literate, intellectually reflective, and committed to lifelong learning, schools must also enhance students' intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies so they're optimally prepared for work and life (National Research Council, 2012).

Successful students develop personal strengths including grit, tenacity, perseverance, and positive academic mindsets. They also learn broader social and emotional competencies such as interacting with diverse individuals and groups in socially skilled and respectful ways; practicing positive, safe, and healthy behaviors; and contributing responsibly and ethically to their peers, family, school, and community (CASEL, 2013a, 2013b).

The best schools foster students' academic, social, and emotional competencies, Students learn to read so they can read to learn. Students also learn to relate so they can navigate. When schools promote students' academic, social, and emotional learning, students will possess the basic competencies, work habits, and values for engaged postsecondary education, meaningful careers, and constructive citizenship (Dymnicki, Sambolt, & Kidron, 2013). We need to balance academic learning with social and emotional learning in schools across the United States.

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning—or SEL—involves acquiring and effectively applying the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2013a, 2013b). SEL programming is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful (Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013).

Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student, citizen, and worker. Schools can help prevent or reduce many different risky behaviors (e.g., drug use, violence, bullying, and dropping out) when they engage in multiyear, integrated efforts to develop students' social and emotional skills. This is best done through effective classroom instruction beginning in preschool and continuing through high school, student engagement in positive activities in and out of the classroom, and broad parent and community involvement in program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been a leading voice in studying, defining, and promoting SEL for nearly 20 years (www.casel.org). Based on extensive research, CASEL has identified five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies at the heart of SEL.

> **Self-awareness**. The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior.
> **Self-management**. The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations, and to set and work toward personal and academic goals.
> **Social awareness**. The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
> **Relationship skills**. The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups through communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.
> **Responsible decision making**. The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, the realistic evaluation of the consequences that stem from actions, and the well-being of self and others.

The short-term goals of SEL programs are to promote students' self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship, and responsible decision-making skills, and to improve their attitudes and beliefs about self, others, and school. These, in turn, provide a foundation for better adjustment and academic performance as reflected in more positive social behaviors and peer relationships, fewer conduct problems, less emotional distress, and improved grades and test scores.

Educators can help develop these competencies in every type of school, and in students of every background

by coordinating two sets of educational strategies:

- Systematically teaching, modeling, and facilitating the application of social and emotional competencies in ways that allow students to apply them as part of their daily repertoire of behaviors, and
- Establishing safe, caring, and highly engaging learning environments involving peer and family initiatives and schoolwide community-building activities.

These two strategies are mutually reinforcing. Positive learning environments help students learn and further develop social-emotional competencies; meanwhile, classrooms, schools, and communities filled with socially and emotionally skilled students are more caring and safe.

Growing Evidence and Interest in SEL

More than two decades of rigorous scientific research shows that high-quality, well-implemented SEL can have a positive effect on school climate and promote a host of academic, social, and emotional benefits for students. A major review of 213 experimental-control group studies of K–12 students who participated in SEL programs demonstrated:

- Improved social and emotional skills, self-concept, bonding to school, and classroom behavior;
- Fewer conduct problems such as disruptive classroom behavior, aggression, bullying, and delinquent acts; and
- Reduced emotional distress such as depression, stress, or social withdrawal.

Students also performed better academically, including on achievement tests where scores averaged 11 percentile points higher than students who did not receive SEL programming (Durlak et al., 2011),

Other investigators have reported similarly positive findings regarding SEL's effect on student behavior and academic performance (Greenberg et al., 2003; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). More recently, Sklad and colleagues (2012) analyzed 75 studies of SEL programs and found beneficial effects on seven major outcome areas: social skills, positive self-image, prosocial behavior, antisocial behavior, substance abuse, mental health, and academic achievement. Researchers at the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago documented that "noncognitive" academic behaviors, academic perseverance, academic mindsets, learning strategies, and social skills positively affect student success in school (Farrington et al., 2012).

Recently, Civic Enterprises, the Washington public policy organization that authored *The Silent Epidemic* and put the high school dropout crisis on the national map, released *The Missing Piece* (Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013). The report, based on findings from a nationally representative survey of more than 600 teachers by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, showed that more than 9 in 10 teachers believe SEL helps students in school, work, and life. Nearly all teachers believe social and emotional skills are teachable. Large percentages believe SEL would benefit students from all backgrounds in academic performance, graduation, college, and workforce readiness. Yet the same teachers also said they need strong support from district and school leaders to effectively implement and promote SEL.

These results mirror sentiment from the broader public. The 2013 PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools found that most Americans agree that public schools should teach students a full range of social, emotional, and cognitive competencies including how to set meaningful goals (89%), communication skills (94%), how to collaborate on projects (84%), and character (76%).

Making SEL a Core Part of Education

Despite widespread demand for social and emotional learning and recognition of its value, SEL remains at the periphery of K–12 education. We need to make it part of the core—just as it is in preschool.

We need to implement classroom strategies that have been proven to work. For the past decade, there has been a growing emphasis on evidence-based programs in education that have solid designs and show significant effect on student outcomes. Educators should expect the same standard for SEL programs and approaches. Indeed, dozens of SEL programs have a well-designed theoretical model, implementation supports and professional development for teachers, and evidence of effectiveness (CASEL, 2005, 2013b)… .

Schools need to fully integrate SEL with their own vision for teaching, learning, and student outcomes (CASEL, 2013a). SEL should be embedded in curriculum and instruction, as well as in student supports and after-school programming. It should be a key feature of teacher preparation and ongoing professional development. Selecting an evidence-based classroom program is just one step in a multiphase, schoolwide process for sustainable SEL implementation. Building a strong school climate requires schoolwide practices that strengthen relationships among students and teachers, students and students, and teachers and teachers. This requires a commitment not only from classroom teachers but also from the school leaders who supervise them.

Ample research supports this view. For example, a summary of 15 years of research on school reform by Bryk and colleagues (2010) identified five essential supports for effective school improvement: strong leadership, solid parent and community involvement, development of professional capacity, strong instructional guidance and materials, and a learning climate that reflects SEL components by being safe, welcoming, stimulating, and nurturing to all students. These supports produced substantial gains in student performance in reading and mathematics. A focus on strong social and emotional development underlies many elements of these supports. CASEL's (2013a) implementation guide and toolkit for schools emphasizes the importance of school–family partnerships and cultural responsiveness, and it describes how school climate and culture contribute to an overall feeling of connectedness and student engagement… .

States support this work by bringing academic, social, and emotional learning standards together to paint a more holistic picture of what students ought to know and be able to do at each developmental level (Dusenbury et al., in press). This means establishing comprehensive K–12 social and emotional learning standards. All 50 states have preschool SEL standards. Many states have integrated SEL standards with existing academic standards but only Illinois, Kansas, and Pennsylvania have stand-alone K–12 SEL standards. Most U.S. teachers support SEL standards (Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013). States also have a responsibility to ensure that teachers understand SEL, including how to foster it in children. State

certification requirements deeply influence what teachers would learn about SEL in certification programs and professional development. Most respondents in the Hart survey said they were interested in more training in teaching SEL (Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013). The largest group of interested teachers had 10 or fewer years of experience, with the potential to apply SEL training to several decades' worth of future students.

Embracing SEL as part of implementing the Common Core State Standards will also be critical. The classroom activities required to help students meet the Common Core—effective communication, project collaboration, interdisciplinary thinking—necessitate strong social and emotional competence among learners, including the ability to persist, empathize with others, and manage their behavior so they can achieve challenging goals… .

SEL has gained importance in federal criteria for district funding. The U.S. Department of Education's recent round of Race to the Top competition awarded significant bonus points for applications that made social and emotional learning a key ingredient in districtwide improvement efforts.

Given the enormous potential of social and emotional learning as a key component of school reform, policy makers in Congress and the federal education department must prioritize SEL. They should weave it into the major planks of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and they should include specific support for it in early learning and in federal assistance to schools in high-poverty communities… .

Making the Most of the Moment

The timing is right to put our knowledge from research about social and emotional learning into action. This will require the involvement and support of educators, researchers, policy makers, and the public across a wide-ranging agenda. Only by making SEL important at every level—classroom, school, district, state, and nation—will it truly become an essential ingredient in education from preschool through high school. As Franklin D. Roosevelt (1940) aptly said: "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." Providing high-quality, balanced education will prepare all students to handle the challenges of life more successfully.

A growing nationwide coalition in support of social and emotional learning already is at work at all these levels. The case for SEL is stronger than ever before. Now we must place a high priority on providing resources to help educators do it well, sustaining the momentum of a growing demand for SEL, and strengthening broad-based support for making SEL a foundation of American education.

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Projects for Further Exploration

1. To gain a better understanding of schools as organizations in the United States, select one or more indicators from the reading by Barr and Dreeben (or from others in this chapter). Then, go your state's website and find school report card data. Within this data, compare schools in your area using at least two of these indicators.
2. Replicate the study by Gracey on the organization of the kindergarten classroom. Observe a preschool or kindergarten class and keep notes on your observations. Write a summary that describes the lessons taught, the organization of the classroom, and the organizational structure in the teacher's lesson plan, plus activities and interactions in the classroom.
3. Take a closer look at the formal academic curriculum. Select a textbook from science, history, or language arts to examine the implicit and explicit lessons taught within these curricula. Some things you might pay attention to are representations of gender, race/ethnicity, and events in U.S. history.

Chapter 5 Roles and Responsibilities: Administrators, Teachers, and Students

Organizations provide the overarching structure and goals for education, but on a day-to-day basis, people run organizations. In this chapter, we focus on the positions individuals hold in schools and the responsibilities, or roles, that accompany them. At the top, in the United States, is the U.S. secretary of education, and at the bottom are the classroom teachers. The "top" position is held by those closest to policy development; the "bottom" position represents those responsible for implementing policies in their classrooms and teaching practice. Describing teachers as situated at the bottom of this hierarchy is not to diminish their role. Indeed, they have the greatest influence on students and considerable power over how policies passed at higher levels are implemented.

The U.S. secretary of education, who heads the federal Department of Education, stands at the top of this organizational hierarchy. Historically, federal involvement in education has been minimal in the United States, where authority has typically been granted to states and local districts. This is also seen in financial support for schools, where the federal government contributes, on average, about 10% to each school's budget. The influence of the federal government began changing with the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002, where, for the first time, the federal government imposed a set of accountability standards on schools. In addition to specifying a testing schedule and performance benchmarks, the federal government also included in this legislation mechanisms for withholding funds from schools that did not meet performance goals. The implementation of Common Core educational standards in 2010 represents an effort to return some of the power over educational policy back to the states. Indeed, each state has its own department of education and leadership. In conjunction with local leadership at the district level, they coordinate educational standards, assessment strategies, and other policy matters. The notion of local control over schools is also evident with school funding, where about 40% of a school's budget comes from state tax revenues and 50% from local property taxes.

School superintendents and schools boards occupy important roles, with considerable responsibilities at the local or district level. Local school boards are responsible for translating broad mandates from the state and federal government into policies that meet the goals of schools and students within the local district. Some of their formal duties include hiring the superintendent, principals, and teachers; determining the size of school budgets; creating the academic calendar and school boundaries; and establishing the academic curriculum. Across the United States, most school boards are elected. Members are disproportionately White, male, and well educated; large urban districts do, however, have a higher percentage of minority members.

Debates continue over the role of local school boards in determining the organization of schools and whether states, local governments, or even city governments should take greater or exclusive control of schools. This topic is discussed in this chapter in a reading by Michael A. Resnick and Anne L. Bryant, who served as leaders in the National School Boards Association. They argue that school boards play an essential and enduring role within the education system.

Within the educational system as a whole, principals occupy a "middle management" position that comes with competing obligations: while they are the highest-ranking authorities in their schools, they are also beholden to the superintendent. Within this chapter, Dan C. Lortie provides insight into the "complications and complexities" of the role of school principal. As both intermediary and leader in the system, principals coordinate policies and activities between the superintendent's office and their teaching staff while representing a public face of educational leadership in the surrounding community. Students often have little knowledge of who principals are and what they do, outside of the threat or reality of being sent to their office for disciplinary issues. On a day-to-day basis, principals are occupied with routine responsibilities of supporting teachers, counseling students and teachers, managing budgets, scheduling classes, writing reports and filing in paperwork, evaluating staff, and working with contractors for lunch and cleaning services.

Just as women are overrepresented in the teaching profession, they also dominate the position of principal. About 52% of all school principals are women (NCES, 2016a), which represents a significant change from 1994, when only one-third of principals were female (NCES, 2009). That said, while 64% of elementary school principals are women, only 30% of high school principals are. In addition, 80% of public school principals are White, which means that Whites are overrepresented within a public school system where minority students represent an increasing share of all students.

Other than students, teachers represent the most common role within the education system. Approximately 3.8 million people are employed as K–12 teachers in the United States, with nearly 3.4 million employed in public schools and 400,000 in private schools (NCES, 2016b). About 75% of these teachers are female, although male teachers are more common in secondary school grades. The position of the teacher is also characterized by some contradictions. While average pay for new teachers is about $36,000 in the United States, it is a job that lands in the top 20% in terms of prestige, according to the National Opinion Research Center. As described by Dan C. Lortie (1975), teaching in the United States has a "special but shadowed social standing"—one that is both "honored and disdained, praised as 'dedicated service' and lampooned as 'easy work'" (p. 10).

Teachers truly serve on the front lines of the educational system and constitute most people's direct contact with the education system. Hopefully, you have a favorite teacher who inspired you to become the person or student you are today. But behind their public demeanors, whether stern or caring, teachers grapple with serious professional questions. In particular, they are encountering a change in the education system, with the shift toward broad standards and accountability, which some feel compromises their autonomy and professionalism. In the reading featured in this chapter, Richard M. Ingersoll and Elizabeth Merrill discuss the criteria for professional status, where teachers meet these criteria and where they fall short. Declining professionalism and the move toward testing and accountability has had palpable effects on teachers' job satisfaction and rates of burnout (Dworkin, 2009). Indeed, some research suggests that about half of current teachers have considered leaving the profession due to heightened attention given to testing and accountability (Walker, 2014).

It is expected that demand for teachers will grow through 2020, with the creation of some 440,000 jobs

throughout the United States. With declining enrollment in teacher preparation programs, some worry about teacher shortages. A lack of willing or able teachers is especially evident in "high-need schools" (those located in urban and rural areas) and in certain fields, like STEM, special education, and bilingual education. To fill the need for more teachers, various strategies are being used, including "alternative certification" and programs such as Teach for America. Some worry, however, that high demand for teachers may erode teacher quality, as teaching programs lower their standards or schools hire and retain ineffective educators. The profession, it seems, is in a difficult place, where the lack of professional autonomy and relatively low salaries fail to attract new recruits to the field but where standards still need to be put in place to ensure that teachers have the qualifications and test scores that enhance student learning (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007).

Although parents do not occupy formal roles within the education system, they do play powerful informal roles. Through parent teacher alliances (PTAs) and other such organizations, parents fulfill a number of responsibilities in their children's schools, ranging from activities with a relatively light touch, like volunteering on field trips and serving as classroom aides, to activities with higher touch, like raising funds and seeking to influence curriculum and hiring decisions. It seems, though, that parents must be careful in how they navigate their involvement. While some parents have been criticized as being disconnected and insufficiently involved (Poza, Brooks, & Valdés, 2014; Valenzuela 2010; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009), others have been accused of being too involved, as with "helicopter parents," and interfering with teachers' authority (Nelson 2010).

Conflicts over parental involvement often boil down to questions of race and social class. While research shows that successful parent–school partnerships can enhance school climate and advance student learning, questions emerge over just who benefits. In her ethnographic work, *Dividing Classes: How the Middle Class Negotiates and Rationalizes School Advantage*, Ellen Brantlinger (2003) illustrated the class bias embedded in the involvement of middle-class mothers, who touted the benefits of school integration, equity, and access while working to preserve the benefits of their own children through tracking and stratification within schools. These insights get an update in this volume, as illustrated in the work of Maia Bloomfield Cucchiara and Erin McNamara Horvat. Their work shows that the involvement of middle-class parents can be both exclusionary and democratic. Using a comparative ethnographic approach, these authors show that in some contexts, parental involvement can work to preserve the benefits of already privileged students while in other contexts, similar parents can work to extend educational benefits to an array of students within the school and districts. Their work echoes the conclusion that parental involvement is a tricky thing, raising questions about how widely the resulting benefits are shared.

Finally, while students are often framed as involuntary subjects within the educational system, some recent interventions show how students can play active and even formal roles within the school system. In many schools, students hold largely ceremonial and symbolic leadership positions. Student council representatives, for example, often claim that they are going to work to provide better lunchtime options and more school spirit activities, and sometimes, they fulfill these campaign promises. Yet rarely do they have real influence on school policy, the curriculum, or disciplinary matters.

With the advent of "student justice panels," however, students are gaining more formal influence within their schools. Cropping up across the United States, student justice panels provide students with a voice and a role in matters of school discipline. As schools have increasingly adopted a "zero tolerance" approach to disciplinary problems, educators, parents, and students have become concerned that students are paying too high a price for their disciplinary infractions. As expressed on the webpage of the Impact Project, "Without intervention that addresses the root of the problem behavior, it is feared that these youth have a high potential to become casualties of our educational system while overloading our juvenile justice system" (theimpactprojectinc.net). Trevor Gardner's selection in this chapter provides an illustrated case study of how student justice panels work and why their impact can be more effective in promoting educational success compared with other, more punitive approaches. He expands upon this work in his 2016 book, *Discipline Over Punishment: Successes and Struggles With Restorative Justice*.

Together, the selections in this chapter profile the various formal—and, to some extent, informal—roles that make up the education system. Although these roles vary in the type of power and influence they hold, each role is essential in the execution of the many tasks and responsibilities that comprise the education system. Hopefully, these readings will give you better understanding of the various positions you have held and been exposed to within the system, as well as insight into positions you might one day hold, whether as teacher or parent.

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READING 19

School Boards

Why American Education Needs Them

Michael A. Resnick and Anne L. Bryant

The formal organizational structure of educational systems includes many levels, ranging from federal influence over funding and educational standards to local schools and classrooms in which teaching and learning take place. Each level has a role to play in meeting the overall goals of schooling in a society. However, this complexity raises the question of where decisions are made and who should have the authority to make decisions about school policies and operations. Traditionally, local control of schools has been held by school boards, elected to represent the views of community citizens. However, these boards have come under fire as governments and citizens look for explanations for why many schools fail to educate children. Some large school districts, like New York City, have shifted to mayoral control—with mixed results. Here, Michael A. Resnick and Anne L. Bryant, leaders in the National School Boards Association, address the importance of school boards to create a link between communities and their schools, to interpret state and federal mandates, and to ensure local oversight of education.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. From your point of view, who should make decisions for schools, and why? Locally elected school boards? Mayors of cities? Other decision makers?
2. What impact do state and federal governments have on local board decision makers? What roles do community members and educators have in influencing their decisions?
3. To what extent have you been aware, throughout your education, of the work of your local school boards? To what extent would you be interested in serving as a board member?

Everyone thinks that they know what's best for schools because they have had a school experience. The public wants their voices heard inside the schoolhouse walls. They want to know that their tax dollars are being spent effectively and responsibly. They want to know that children in their communities are receiving a world-class education. They want to know that someone is accountable for what happens in classrooms. And the ones who are accountable are the members of the local school board… .

From "School Boards: Why American Education Needs Them," by M. A. Resnick and A. L. Bryant, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(6), pp. 11–14. Copyright 2010 by Phi Delta Kappa International. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

Although states and the federal government are becoming increasingly involved in education, public education remains a local enterprise. It represents a community's culture and values, which in turn are reflected in our schools. What works in one district doesn't necessarily translate to others.

Increasingly, local school boards are charged with ensuring that broader state and federal education requirements are met while translating local values and priorities into policies to meet the goals and aspirations of parents, taxpayers, and local businesses. By engaging their communities (parents, businesses, civic and religious groups, and community members), school boards create a culture that supports schools in their main mission: raising student achievement.

Across the country, school boards are successfully doing just that while performing a variety of key governance functions, such as setting academic goals, priorities, and policies; empowering the superintendent; and providing on-the-ground oversight and accountability for results.

In recent years, the chronically weak performance of several high-profile urban districts has led to some form of mayoral takeover or operational influence when school boards could not muster the necessary leadership to overcome educational challenges in their schools and the larger community. While a relative handful in number, the attention given to these districts has caused some to wrongly conclude that the nation's 14,350 school boards overall might not be needed or equipped to provide a 21st-century education.

So, the questions raised are: Why do we have school boards? What do we lose without them? and What are they doing that tells us they are up to the task?

Making the Connection

One major and increasingly important purpose for having school boards is to connect the federal and state levels, as well as local educators, with the real and diverse world of local people in a way that is close to the community, accountable to it, and which has the authority to act. Mayors and county officials can use their clout to rally the community behind the schools, but these officials are unlikely to provide the knowledge, focus, commitment, or on-going accessibility that school boards do. After all, mayors run cities with a myriad of priorities to fulfill, including the needs of the majority of voters who don't have children in school. If education becomes a department of city or county government, what are the chances that education in the long run will get the attention it deserves? Elected school boards were created for the singularity of their purpose and accountability.

The demands of education have changed, and so has the operation of today's school boards. Go to school board meetings and witness the time devoted to student achievement issues, including newer approaches to goal setting, budget and policy development, and program evaluation. Look at the use of data and the level of reports given and discussed.

At the board level and in other meetings, board members work closely with their local community on issues of importance. Similarly, look at the conferences school board members are attending and the resources they're using to sharpen their knowledge around student achievement. Critics of school boards too often lack knowledge of the successful leadership that today's school boards provide through their changed substantive focus and governing method.

For example, in 1999, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) launched its Key Work of School Boards program, a year-round governance process used by many U.S. school boards. Specifically, the Key Work is aimed at increasing student achievement through effective board practices in goal setting, policy and resource alignment, evaluation, accountability, and fostering a climate for success (Gemberling, Smith, and Villani 2009).

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, NSBA is developing a school board training program for data-driven decision making that reflects the Obama Administration's Race to the Top program. Likewise, state school boards associations have developed hands-on programs to help boards meet a wide range of challenges through effective governance.

Taking the Lead for Students

Beyond good decision making, do school boards perform special leadership functions that make a difference in raising student achievement? Evidence from Iowa suggests that they do.

Since 1999, the Iowa Lighthouse Study has interviewed and surveyed hundreds of school district leaders and school board members in an effort to answer that question (Iowa Association of School Boards 2000). Examined were districts that were comparable in socioeconomic makeup and finances but which had vastly different student achievement. One of the study's key findings was that low-performing school districts had a self-fulfilling prophecy of low expectations by school staff and students. By contrast, high-performing school districts had climates of success specifically established by the board through expectations of students and staff, including the accountability and resources provided by the board and the community support that the board garnered for the schools.

In these high-performing districts, the boards and superintendent had strong team relationships, including a constructive oversight process for setting goals and evaluating results to drive the staff's work. Not surprisingly school boards had a different view of the school district's accountability and responsibility than did the school staff, and that difference can add to the climate for success.

School boards have a long history as a cornerstone of democracy. Attend any school board meeting and you'll see communities having their say. Board members take their work home—and to grocery stores, soccer games, and gas stations—because they're never off duty. They can't be—they live in the communities where they serve, allowing for easy access and input from those who put them into office.

E-mails, phone calls, PTA meetings, and other regular communications are part of the job in a way that can't be matched by mayors or distant state agencies. Given their proximity to the community and their singularity of purpose, school boards are not only uniquely positioned to hear the community, but to proactively engage the community as well.

No magic bullet exists for this, but the Key Work of School Boards encourages communication and transparency as critical pieces of the puzzle. Inviting key stakeholders and the public to the table, whether at public school board meetings or in other ways, creates a culture of collaboration that aids school board success. By building strong relationships, school boards can actively engage key stakeholders and grow support for their schools.

School boards give parents a mechanism for engaging in decisions that directly affect their children. This ability to engage allows parents to effect change and feel invested not only in their children's schools, but in the child's education as a whole. This cannot help but affect student achievement.

Having school boards that engage the public also pays off in passing tax and bond referenda. Debates over local funding measures frequently become high-profile community discussions about the direction of education in the local schools. Those debates also include the majority of people who don't have school-age

children. They provide a means to balance local control and priorities with those of the state and federal levels. To pass these measures, typically school board members, and not professional staff, reach out to stakeholders —business leaders, parents, teachers, religious and community groups—to demonstrate how the use of taxpayer dollars will strengthen the schools and their community.

As education becomes more centralized at the state and federal levels, providing communities with opportunities to talk with policy makers and influence policy matters will become even more important. Anything less risks alienating parents and other community members from the schools. It also risks shuffling off decisions to other levels of government that are not as knowledgeable—or caring—about a school district's plans or the community's desires. To meet these goals, school boards are well positioned with the perspective, knowledge of their schools, and authority to represent the system as a whole.

Furthermore, school boards make decisions in public, not behind closed doors or by executive fiat. The requirement that decisions occur through a majority vote helps ensure that a board consider a variety of options, debate proposals, and consider differing viewpoints—including voices from the community, not just from the school board.

Boards Are Up to the Task

Even in sound economic times, budgets and funding are at the core of the issues facing school boards. In times of financial stress, funding and budgeting become even more urgently tied to what schools are able to deliver. Add to this the increased numbers of poor and underserved children, immigrant students who may not speak English, and the diversion of tax dollars from public schools to other purposes. Unlike school board members, legislators and mayors address a variety of issues in their scope as government officials. Education issues are the heart of what school board members do, and they make decisions accordingly without the burden of partisan politics.

Schools also are human institutions. Parents entrust their children to schools for six hours a day, 180 days a year and expect schools to provide a safe environment that also supports their broader development of skills, interests, character, and values. School boards must respond to diverse and varied communities, as well as set broader education and social policies and practices that address specific interests of their communities. They must also provide oversight to ensure that their policies are met… .

Conclusion

Schools can't exist in a vacuum. They're a critical part of their communities and they must engage those communities in order to thrive. The responsibility for drawing community and business leaders, parents, civic groups, and the public into the schools falls squarely on the shoulders of the local school board. To go about the business of running schools and educating children, the local school board must engage with the community, listen to its concerns, and enact policies and strategies that make the most of the local community's resources and culture.

Just as schools are human institutions, so are school boards. They aren't any more infallible than mayors, state legislators, presidents—or nondemocratically governed institutions. The institution of school boards should not be eliminated because of the performance of some chronically weak boards.

At the same time, we should not excuse the performance of such boards. Given the value that school boards bring to the education process, the better way to address this is by changing a weak board's leadership through the electoral process and by strengthening those boards through the various governance resources that can be made available to them—just as we do for other governing bodies in both the public and the private sector.

In sum, if local school boards were eliminated, it wouldn't be long before communities would try to reinvent them. School boards, as an institution, make our schools stronger and better equipped to educate the 50 million children in our nation's public schools.

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READING 20

School Principal

Complications and Complexities

Dan C. Lortie

The school principal holds an administrative role in the middle between government, school boards, and superintendents and teachers, staff, and students. Principals are the leaders of schools, and as such shape the culture of their schools. Schools have stronger and more effective cultures when principals are adaptable, motivate members of the school community, are cooperative and innovative, resolve conflicts, and effectively achieve their goals (Louis & Wahlstrom, 2011). Their roles involve balancing demands of multiple internal and external constituencies. The constraints and pressures on schools often fall to the principal to negotiate. In this excerpt from a new edition of an old classic, Dan C. Lortie reviews the challenges elementary school principals face. Among the daily ongoing challenges are scarcity of time, interruptions to work, maintaining safety, and paperwork. More complex tasks include teacher evaluations and supervision, and problems or mistakes that need to be rectified. In their leadership positions, principals need to set the tone for the school. This reading provides an overview of the complex role of principals in schools.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. In what ways is the role of principal a balancing act?
2. What are some ongoing challenges faced by principals in their day-to-day work?
3. What organizational and personality traits do principals need to be effective in their job?

Complications and Complexities

What is hard about being an elementary principal? What is the downside? We will look at conditions that complicate the day, tasks that principals find difficult and/or dislike, and, finally, trouble that can strike as they go about doing their work. The progression in the discussion is from the least to the most serious challenges elementary principals face.

From *School Principal: Managing in Public* (pp. 119–144), by D. C. Lortie, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Copyright 2009 by University of Chicago Press. Reprinted with permission.

Complicating Conditions

Certain of the conditions under which principals work make that work more challenging than it might otherwise be. Although no single problem is limited to the principalship, the combination of challenges may well be unique.

The Scarcity of Time

"What do you do all day long?" people ask my friend the Chicago principal. The questioners point out that since the children are dispersed among classrooms and supervised by teachers, she must surely have a lot of time on her hands. Perhaps memory plays a part in their raising the question; my informal inquiries, including discussion with persons who work in schools, suggest that many have little idea of how their elementary principals spent their time. There is irony, therefore, in the fact that principals express a lot of anxiety about not having enough time, of feeling constant pressure as they try to complete their work. We mentioned earlier that classroom teachers have designated responsibilities that prevent them from being free to assist the principal in doing organizational jobs. That low "assignability" of staff members contributes to the long list of duties principals have to handle (McPherson, Salley, & Baehr, 1975). Empirical studies have pointed out that the principal's day tends to be fractured into numerous activities, which, on average, last only a few minutes (Peterson, 1977). This fragmentation of time, although not unique to school managers, is probably exacerbated by the nature of managerial work in schools (Mintzberg, 1973). Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that school officials find it difficult to persuade board members and the public at large to spend money on administrative assistance for principals.

What other aspects of the job produce principals' sense of time deprivation? There seem to be several. One is the rigidity of school schedules—the length of the day and number of weeks and the total time schools may operate—are all specified in advance and are extremely resistant to change. Whatever is going to be accomplished has to be done within the rigid parameters of overall schedules set by state authorities and specified by school district authorities. Collective bargaining has added to that rigidity by placing distinct limits on the amount of time that principals can ask teachers to meet outside regular school hours. Other causes grow out of the nature of principal tasks and their definition as public service, both of which limit the amount of time principals can use as they see fit. All compress the working day.

A lack of time flexibility is built into some of the major sets of tasks faced by principals, particularly, for example, in the responsibility to evaluate staff members. This area is highly formalized, an approach that is reinforced by the anxiety of officials to avoid legal action and the need to respect specifics worked out in collective bargaining contracts.

The steps in teacher evaluation illustrate how formalization reduces the control principals have over their time. Although districts differ in their specific requirements (e.g., how many members of the faculty to evaluate each year), the process normally demands many hours. The prescribed steps must be taken in a set order and, once initiated, must proceed at an appropriate pace: delays complicate communication and add

anxiety for those being evaluated. Each step takes time—a preparatory conference between the principal and the teacher, observation in the classroom, writing up observations, and a conference to share the evaluation with the teacher. Tension can run high, for the results are entered in the teacher's permanent file. Principals quickly discover how prickly the process can be, leading them to adhere closely to district rules in case teachers who are dissatisfied with their evaluations fault them on procedural grounds (perhaps through the union) or central officials reprimand them for flouting district policies and practices. These rigidly prescribed sequences can stretch over many days during the academic year, particularly in schools with large faculties and/or in districts with particularly stringent procedures. Principals, as we shall see, express numerous doubts about evaluation; some of their dissatisfaction lies in the bureaucratic rigidities involved and the time spent at the expense of activities they consider more important.

On Interruption

Although research on managerial time indicates that interactions tend to come fast and often, there are respects in which principals are probably more vulnerable to interruption than is the case in many other organizational settings. Like middle managers in general, it is difficult for principals to resist demands from higher ranked officials; school heads complain that they are sidetracked by sudden deadlines for information and/or requests to attend meetings on matters in which they have little interest. In addition, the norms of public service deny them the right to privacy so prevalent in corporate affairs. Unlike the situation in private sector, it is difficult to erect barriers to limit access from their customers. Not for them, for example, are the elaborate, recorded responses to telephone calls found in businesses, which constrain access to officers by steering callers to "customer service representatives." In schools, however, to be seen as unresponsive to parents is a serious matter. In addition, many principals maintain an "open door" to teachers, a practice that is consistent with the emphasis we have seen on sustaining the approval and support of faculty members.

One way to underscore the weakness of barriers between principals and the public at large is to consider the scope of potential intervention by "customers" up to and including intervention in the processes of production. There are retail chains (e.g., Sears Roebuck) that control the manufacturing processes of some of the products they sell either through factory ownership or specifications in contracts with suppliers. Such retail firms deal with complaints in a routine fashion, usually by replacing products or refunding the dissatisfied customer's money. They would hardly agree, however, to a retail customer visiting and suggesting changes in the manufacture of, let's say, a washing machine—incredulity would greet any such request. Compare that, however, to the situation of a principal where parents insist that their child be transferred to another class, a demand that penetrates to the core of instructional practice. Granting the request may alienate not only one faculty member but, depending on the circumstances, other teachers as well. Simple rejection of parental requests ("That is none of your business") is not among the responses available to the principal. In fact, a parent who continues to be dissatisfied can appeal to officials in central office. Similar contrasts can be made, of course, to the ability of surgeons and other high-status professionals to restrict client influence on how they do their work.

The Maintenance of Order and Safety

The principal is a front-line supervisor with custodial responsibility (in loco parentis) for hundreds of young children. President Harry Truman's placard saying "the buck stops here" would be appropriate on the principal's desk, particularly in regard to maintaining good order and student safety. The principal serves as backup for teachers who need assistance in maintaining control and who refer individual students for final decisions. There are also occasions when the principal acts as the immediate supervisor of students, such as in the lunchroom or halls and play areas, which may not be supervised by teachers.

Outbursts of student misbehavior can be sudden and unpredictable—effective responses may demand immediate attention and allow little time for deliberation. The same applies, of course, to dealing with accidents in which a student is hurt. The risk of legal liability intensifies official concern, particularly if parents become alarmed and are ready to blame the school for injuries sustained by the children. Other tasks, even when interrupting them is costly, must be put aside. Principal work is marked by such unpredictable urgencies.

It is important to bear in mind the behavioral volatility of children, to recall that they are only gradually socialized into complying with the norms of orderly behavior which can usually be taken for granted among adults. Those charged with supervising children learn that lapses in adult control can produce disorder and that keeping order requires the physical presence of adults. That need results in "pinning down" many staff members and by reducing their mobility, also limiting the range of tasks they might otherwise undertake and preventing the formation of a more refined division of labor. It is another factor that affects the "assignability" of those who report to the principal.

Paperwork

The interviews make it clear that principals see various types of desk work as a constant, unremitting pressure on their time, a pressure many detest. If done at the office, it cuts off contact with teachers and students, but if taken home, affects relationships within the family. Some of the tasks result from the principal being the only (official) manager in the school who consequently has responsibility for overseeing the ordering and distribution of supplies, monitoring cash revenues, etc. Superintendents and boards also expect the principal to report on whatever information they consider relevant and urgent at a particular time—in addition, of course, to maintaining regular records such as attendance figures, which affect state revenues to the district. State and federal surveys are routinely shunted to principals who see such duties as contributing nothing to the instruction of their students. A small number of suburban principals mentioned that they had secretaries or assistants they could entrust with much of the paperwork; nationwide, there was a similar lack of help.

There are subjective costs in having to spend considerable amounts of time doing paperwork—tasks that are not only disliked but that block action on other tasks that are felt to be more urgent, important, or interesting. The load of paperwork also intensifies the principals' sense of too little time.

Complex Tasks

One is hard put to think of any occupation that has no difficult or even distasteful tasks that have to be done. They may be difficult to do well or intrinsically complex. When we bear in mind that school management is fundamentally interactive in nature, it is not surprising that the major complexities that emerge focus on relationships with other people. Two questions that provoked talk about such difficulties will be discussed here; the first asked what aspect of the work is most difficult to do well and the second inquired into any mistakes the principal had made during the previous year… . Unrewarding tasks are difficult in a particular way; dealing with them requires mobilizing energy without the hope of pleasure and at the expense of tasks that are rewarding.

Challenges at the Core

The most frequent responses dealing with difficult tasks focus on the core of the principal's instructional responsibilities—that is, the formal evaluation and supervision of faculty members (Table 20.1). Within that large category, we find two central sources of difficulty: the lack of confidence principals have in the evaluative procedures they are required to use and the resistance teachers show to evaluation and to making whatever changes are proposed by the principal. (Less frequent but closely related responses include dismissing teachers, principal dislike of the evaluative process, and sustaining teacher morale.)

Principals mention several problems in evaluating teachers and using the assessments they make to supervise their work. The process, they say, is "too subjective." The appropriate criteria are not clear, and/or there is not enough time to visit classrooms and make solid judgments. ("It's hard to define what you are looking for and to get it across" [Male, 52].) Two kinds of uncertainty are evident—"How do I know what is best?" and "Do I have enough information to make a good judgment?" There are issues, then, in regard to the appropriateness of available standards and doubts about the empirical basis for their judgments.

Table 20.1 Most Difficult Task

	Mentions	*% Total Mentions*
A. Evaluation and supervision of teachers		
Weaknesses of evaluation process	31	27%
Dealing with teacher resistance	22	19%
Principal dislikes process	5	4%
Dismissing teachers disturbing	4	4%
Sustaining teacher morale	2	2%

Subtotal	64	56%
B. Other tasks		
Paperwork and "administrivia"	12	11%
Deciding without adequate knowledge	7	6%
Dealing with parents (resistant, angry)	6	5%
Resolving conflicts	5	4%
Living with time constraints	4	4%
Student discipline	3	3%
Miscellaneous (1 mention each)	12	11%
Subtotal	49	44%
Total mentions (*N* = 107)	**113**	**100%**

Some principals felt caught between boards and superintendents who wanted corroboration for possible dismissal and teachers who wanted supportive evaluations; the first called for cool and detailed critiques, the second for more generous appraisals. Other principals saw a contradiction between representing evaluation as pedagogical assistance while, in fact, using it as the basis for retention or dismissal. Some principals rejected the assumption they perceived in evaluative procedures, namely, that there is only one right way to teach. Others reported that central office required them to use forms with specific and limited choices that constrained the quality of their judgments. Principals may, moreover, be required to state conclusions when unsure of their diagnoses; for example, they may not understand why a teacher is having particular problems and what steps might correct them. Recall, however, that principals, whatever their misgivings, have no choice in this matter—they must complete and submit formal evaluations; private reservations must be set aside and formal procedures carried out.

Given the variety of bases for discomfort mentioned by principals, it appears that being required to do formal evaluations imposes interpersonal and emotional "costs" on a substantial number of principals. Yet no respondent called for serious revision of the process or its elimination; it may be that despite those costs, principals see their evaluative responsibilities as supporting their authority in technical and professional realms. It concretizes the right of the principal to evaluate teacher behavior and to propose changes in their classroom activity; it underlines the important part played by principals in the district "chain of command." In a context of many limits on their authority, it remains valued by principals despite the problems it creates; the responses, taken together, point to considerable ambivalence toward the responsibility to evaluate teachers.

A substantial proportion of the principals' responses (19%) referred to the lack of cooperation shown by teachers when told to make changes in their behavior. The word "threatened" appears often in such responses, with principals varying in how broadly they apply the term to teachers—some generalize broadly while others restrict such references to a few. There are times when teacher resistance is portrayed sympathetically and times when it is not. Assisting teachers with some problems may face built-in difficulties, such as helping teachers to develop more control in the classroom.

> I was against ranking teachers when I was a teacher and I still am. (Male, 35)

> The teacher union protects mediocrity. (Male, 61)

> The more you intercede the more the children disrespect the teacher. (Female, 50)

Some principals mention the need for tact, the importance of taking teacher sensitivities into account. Whatever the specifics, teachers are not portrayed as welcoming evaluation and the supervision growing out of it. One of the challenges facing principals, therefore, is to exercise their instructional authority in ways that do not alienate the members of their faculties.

> You have to keep a positive rapport with the person you are evaluating. Trying to get adults to change is a hell of a lot harder than getting children to change. (Male, 49)

The other responses to this question point to the variety of difficulties principals associate with their work. They may disdain the seemingly endless paperwork and administrative duties they define as trivial, and they are hard-pressed to maintain the energy to perform tasks that bore them or that seem unimportant. Some regretted their lack of knowledge: ignorance of cleaning techniques hampered one principal in supervising custodians, a former physical education teacher found it hard to cope with the academic curriculum, and another principal who knew little about budget matters had trouble dealing with the central office business manager. It can be taxing to interact with angry parents or those, at another extreme, who show little interest in what is happening to their children. Conflict, time constraints, and discipline problems round out the list of difficult tasks and situations.

What general observations can we derive from these responses? Two appear to be clear. Principals face considerable uncertainty in the course of their daily activities, uncertainty that makes their work harder; they are often unsure about the standards they should use and the reliability or validity of their judgments. The second overall theme is relational complexity. Teachers can and do fail to respond to the professional judgments of the principal. Parents produce unpredicted outbursts while students may exhibit puzzling and/or defiant behavior. Complexities around interaction account for a large proportion of the difficulties they mention. If their efforts to resolve problems with parents and subordinates fail, principals may be left with chronically dissatisfied parents and/or embittered faculty members, an unhappy and career-threatening state

of affairs. Time and again we see principals emphasize the importance of good working relationships; at the same time, it is also evident that they cannot count on them to prevail.

Mistakes

Mistakes are, of course, considerably more likely to occur in difficult rather than easy situations; for that reason, they are cited here as another indicator of the particular tasks that principals find difficult to perform. Respondents were asked to talk about any mistakes they had made in the recent past. Seventy-one percent were ready to respond with actions they regretted or actions they wished they had taken and did not (Table 20.2).

The responses to this question are, in interesting ways, similar to those we just examined. Respondents ready to concede mistakes link most of them to day-in, day-out relationships; they connected 68% of the mistakes to interactions with others. Of those 61 relational errors, teachers stand out as the major source (32/61 of N = 52%). The latter divide almost equally between employment issues of hiring and firing (M = 14) and problems that arise in the day-to-day management of faculty members (M = 18). The following quotation is a strong instance.

> I have one teacher I think is crappy. I say some things, and weigh it. I wish she would take early retirement. I wish it, but I don't say it. I put kids in her classroom every year. Would I put my own kid in her classroom? No. I've been guilty for 22 years of not being able to get rid of bad teachers. (Male, 47)

This respondent is not alone in citing reluctance to let teachers go as a mistake. In nine of fourteen references to teachers, the principals regretted not having arranged their dismissal; the remaining five principals mentioned hiring teachers who did not work out. (The three mistakes with noncertified employees were also regrets about waiting too long to dismiss them.) Decisions about employment, and particularly the reluctance to dismiss staff members, can produce remorse. The most frequent regrets arise from omissions, from not acting rather than from acting too boldly; the others were based on poor predictions about how teachers would perform.

The responses classified under "managing faculty" include a variety of mistakes that can be made in supervising teachers. They must be assigned to particular classes, a process that can and does go wrong. There are issues with no clear answers. How should one use one's scarce resources of time and attention? Should one emphasize better performance from teachers, including more training opportunities, or devote more time and effort to increasing rapport with them? One principal may regret not going along with teacher preferences and another regret not having resisted them more strongly. Some principals may rue expressing anger at an uncooperative teacher where others wished they had not ignored the feelings of, and not helping, a new group of teachers displaced from a school that was closed. The perplexing choices involved in exercising authority in achieving an effective balance between "consideration" and "thrust," to quote terms used by Andrew Halpin (Halpin & Croft, 1963), are potential sources of remorse.

Table 20.2 Types of Mistakes

	Mentions	*% Total Mentions*
1. Relational errors		
Teachers		
Managing faculty	18	20
Hiring and firing	14	16
Subtotal	32	36
Noncertified staff		
Hiring and firing	3	3
Parents		
Public relations	8	9
Allocation time and energy	2	2
Subtotal	10	11
Students		
Helped more	7	8
Disciplinary action	2	2
Subtotal	9	10
Central office		
Pushed harder	4	5
Avoided anger	2	2
Informed better	1	1
Subtotal	7	8

Subtotal of relational errors	61	68 (r.e.)
2. Other allocations of time and energy		
Instructional program	10	11
Other	3	3
Subtotal	13	14
3. Career-related regrets	3	3
4. Miscellaneous (1 mention each)	11	13
Grand Total Mentions (*N* = 80/112: 71%)	**88**	**98 (r.e.)**

The mistakes made with parents consist almost entirely of not according them enough attention or not doing well in relating to them. You can be "too confrontational" said one, a sentiment voiced by two others as well who criticized themselves for being too "testy" and "authoritarian" with parents. Others regret mistakes such as being late in providing information about school changes and being slow to defuse the concerns of some parents. One idea summarizes these responses: the wise principal pays close attention to the parents of students and works hard to keep them well-informed and satisfied. Failure to do so can be costly.

Professional consciences are voiced when principals talk about mistakes with students; while two wish they had been somewhat sterner in disciplinary matters, others regretted occasions when they might have done more to help. Examples include the failure to seek outside expertise in a particular case, not fighting to prevent students from having to compete in an unfair (as she saw it) district competition and, in one tragic case, not trying harder to prevent a student from committing suicide. These mistakes exemplify what can be an important aspect of the principal's moral concerns—the obligation to serve as the defender of, and advocate for, the students in his or her charge.

Mistakes vis-à-vis central office differ. Some say they should have pushed harder against central office decisions; a few regret occasions when they displayed negative feelings toward superordinates and their decisions.

Finally 14% of those mentions derive from what principals later see as poor judgments in allocating their own time and energy—mostly, insufficient attention devoted to instructional matters. Principals are exposed continuously to the idea that they should exercise "educational leadership," an injunction from authorities who do not necessarily accompany it with permission to slight competing obligations. Some look back, it seems, and blame themselves when they have not met whatever time and energy standards they associate with instructional leadership. One principal's regrets were echoed by others as well:

> Strengths for me are conferences, public relations, communications. Up to this year I have not

> concentrated on curriculum as much as I should have, perhaps. I want to mesh the two better. I'm not sure if it can be done, but I would like to. (Female, 40)

To summarize, the responses to our two questions on task difficulties undermine any view of the work of elementary principals as straightforward and uncomplicated. The difficulties they described arose in the central responsibilities laid on them, responsibilities, as we have seen, that included aims and relationships they considered important, for example, the oversight and improvement of instruction provided by faculty members. Substantial numbers doubted their own ability to make solid judgments on the quality of teacher performance; similar numbers found teachers did not respond affirmatively to their direction on how to improve their work.

Asked about mistakes they had made, these principals faulted themselves primarily in their managerial decisions in employment matters and where they chose to focus their attention and energy. They were too slow to dismiss ineffective teachers; they made mistakes in how they organized the work of their subordinates. Some did not, as they see it, do a good job in relating to parents and handling their relationship with central office. While none said they put too much emphasis on instructional matters, over a tenth wished they had concentrated more on teaching and learning. Some felt, after the fact, that they had not honored their obligation to take proper care of their students. It seems that recriminations come readily for these men and women—recriminations that grow out of the uncertainties and relational complexities that inhere in their work.

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READING 21

The Status of Teaching as a Profession

Richard M. Ingersoll and Gregory J. Collins

Teachers are often considered the backbone of schools; without them there would be no school. Thus, understanding teachers' roles is key to understanding the educational system. Discussions of organizations often include information about the roles people occupy within them. One aspect of roles that distinguishes organizations is the type of workers they employ. Professionals have a high degree of control over their work environments, high prestige, and relatively high compensation compared to nonprofessionals. This designation is not without controversy, and it is often at the foundation of many labor disputes. Whether teachers qualify as professionals is one of these debates. Richard M. Ingersoll and Gregory J. Collins evaluate the criteria of professionalization as they apply to teachers and conclude that teachers generally fall into a category called "semi-professionals."

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What criteria differentiate professionals from other types of workers?
2. Where do teachers meet or fall short of these criteria?
3. Will teachers ever gain professional status? What organizational or occupational changes would have to take place in order for teachers to gain professional status?

Professionalization has long been a source of both hope and frustration for teachers. Since early in the 20th century, educators have repeatedly sought to promote the view that elementary and secondary teaching is a highly complex kind of work, requiring specialized knowledge and skill and deserving of the same status and standing as traditional professions, like law and medicine. This movement to professionalize teaching has, however, been marked by both confusion and contention, much of which centers on what it means to be a profession and to professionalize a particular kind of work. To some, the essence of a profession is advanced training, and hence the way to best professionalize teaching is to upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills through enhanced training and professional development. For others, the essence of a profession lies in the attitudes individual practitioners hold toward their work. In this view, the best way to professionalize teaching is to instill an ethos of public service and high standards—a sense of professionalism—among teachers. For even others, the focus is on the organizational conditions under which teachers work; in this view, the best way to professionalize teaching is to improve teachers' working conditions. As a result of this wide range of emphases, it is often unclear whether education critics and reformers are referring to the same things when they discuss professionalization in teaching (Labaree, 1992, 2004; Lortie, 1969, 1975).

Although education reformers often disagree over what is meant by profession, professionalism, and professionalization, students of occupations, notably sociologists, do not. The study of work, occupations, and professions has been an important topic in sociology for decades, and researchers in this subfield have

developed what is known as the professional model—a series of organizational and occupational characteristics associated with professions and professionals and, hence, useful to distinguish professions and professionals from other kinds of work and workers (Abbott, 1988; Etzioni, 1969; Freidson, 1986, 2001; Hughes, 1965; Larson, 1977; Starr, 1982). These include rigorous training and licensing requirements, favorable working conditions, an active professional organization or association, substantial workplace authority, relatively high compensation, and high prestige. From this viewpoint, occupations can be assessed according to the degree to which they do or do not exhibit the characteristics of the professional model. The established or "traditional" professions—law, medicine, university teaching, architecture, science, and engineering, in particular—are usually regarded as the strongest examples of the professional model. There are, of course, large variations both between and within these professions in the degree to which they exhibit the professional model. Moreover, most professions have been and are currently undergoing change in the degree to which they exhibit the attributes of the professional model, that is, in their degree of professionalization or deprofessionalization (Freidson, 2001; Simpson & Simpson, 1983).

Sociologists have also been careful to distinguish professionalization from professionalism. The former refers to the degree to which occupations exhibit the structural or sociological attributes, characteristics, and criteria identified with the professional model. The latter refers to the attitudinal or psychological attributes of those who are considered to be, or aspire to be considered as, professionals. From the latter perspective, a professional is someone who is not an amateur, but is committed to a career and to public service. Although professionalism is often considered part of the professionalization process, sociologists do not consider it a reliable indicator of the professional model. Members of established professions do not necessarily exhibit a higher degree of the attitudes associated with professionalism than do those in less professionalized occupations. For instance, those with a strong service orientation—who place more importance on helping others and contributing to society and less importance on material rewards such as income and status—are less likely to be found in some of the traditional professions, such as law, and more likely to be found in occupations such as nursing and teaching that traditionally have not been categorized as full professions (Ingersoll, 2003; Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Rosenberg, 1981).

This chapter attempts to theoretically and empirically ground the debate over the status of teaching as a profession. Our purpose is neither explanatory nor evaluative. That is, we do not seek to provide a historical account of the sources behind teachers' status, nor do we seek to assess the benefits and costs, advantages, and disadvantages of professionalization. Moreover, our purpose is not normative; while we personally feel teaching should be treated as a profession, our purpose here is analytic and descriptive. Our objective is to define and describe teaching's occupational status. The focus of this analysis is on professionalization or the characteristics of school workplaces and teaching staffs, and not on professionalism or the attitudes of individual teachers. Our primary point is that much of the educational discussion and literature on teaching as a profession has overlooked some of the most basic characteristics that sociologists have used to distinguish professions from other kinds of occupations. We empirically ground the subject by presenting a range of nationally representative data from the best sources available. From these data we develop a series of indicators of the traditional characteristics of the professional model and use them to assess the professionalization of teaching across the nation. These include:

1. Credential and licensing levels
2. Induction and mentoring programs for entrants
3. Professional development support, opportunities, and participation
4. Specialization
5. Authority over decision making
6. Compensation levels
7. Prestige and occupational social standing

These, of course, are not the only characteristics used to define professions, nor are they the only kinds of criteria used to distinguish or to classify work and occupations in general. But they are among the most widely used indicators of professions and professionals and are the subject of much discussion in reference to teachers and schools.

In background analyses of these empirical indicators, we have found large differences in professionalization among different kinds of schools. Consistent with other research on school organization, we found school sector (public/private) and poverty level, in particular, to be the most significant factors related to professionalization (Ingersoll, 1997, 2003).

Below, we will briefly describe each of the classic indicators of professionalization we examined, and then we will summarize what the data tell us about levels of professionalization in teaching and, where possible, the extent to which it varies across these above different types of schools.

How Professionalized Is Teaching?

Credentials

To sociologists, the underlying and most important quality distinguishing professions from other kinds of occupations is the degree of expertise and complexity involved in the work itself. In this view, professional work involves highly complex sets of skills, intellectual functioning, and knowledge that are not easily acquired and not widely held. For this reason, professions are often referred to as the "knowledge-based" occupations. But even if laypeople were to acquire these complex sets of skills and knowledge, rarely would they be able to practice as professionals. Entry into professions requires credentials. That is, entry into professions typically requires a license, which is obtained only after completion of an officially sanctioned training program and passage of examinations. Indeed, it is illegal to do many kinds of work, professional and not, from plumbing and hairstyling to law and medicine, without a license.

These credentials serve as screening or "gatekeeping" devices. Their rationale is protection of the interests of the public by ensuring that practitioners hold an agreed-upon level of knowledge and skill, and by filtering out those with substandard levels of knowledge and skill. The importance of such credentials is evidenced by the practice, commonly used by professionals, such as physicians, dentists, architects, and attorneys, of prominently displaying official documentation of their credentials in their offices.

Given the importance of credentials to professions, not surprisingly, upgrading the licensing requirements for new teachers has been an important issue in school reform. (Licenses for teachers are known as teaching certificates and are issued by states.) But it has also been a source of contention. On one side are those who argue that entry into teaching should be more highly restricted, as in traditional professions. From this viewpoint, efforts to upgrade certification requirements for new teachers will help upgrade the quality and qualifications of teachers and teaching.

On the other side are those who argue that entry into teaching should be eased. Proponents of this view have pushed a range of initiatives, all of which involve a loosening of the entry gates: programs designed to entice professionals into midcareer changes to teaching; alternative certification programs, whereby college graduates can postpone formal education training, obtain an emergency teaching certificate, and begin teaching immediately; and Peace Corps–like programs, such as Teach for America, which seek to lure the "best and brightest" into understaffed schools. These alternative routes into the occupation claim the same rationale as the more restrictive traditional credential routes—enhanced recruitment of talented candidates into teaching—but the ultimate consequence of such initiatives, intended or not, could be a decrease in the professional status of teaching. That is, traditional professions rarely resort to loosening licensing standards to recruit and retain quality practitioners.

Conflict over the ease of entry into teaching is reflected in the degree to which employed teachers actually hold a full state-approved certificate. The data (the first row in Table 21.1) show that most, but not all, teachers in public districts do, indeed, hold full teaching certificates. In contrast, teachers in private schools are

far less inclined to hold a full license to teach; approximately half of private school teachers do so. This reflects different standards in public-private state regulations; many states do not require private school teachers to hold state certification (Tryneski, 2007). It also contrasts sharply with traditional professions. Hospitals, whether they are public or for-profit, for instance, would rarely hire unlicensed doctors and nurses to fill regular physician and licensed nurse positions (Simpson & Simpson, 1983).

This does not mean, of course, that private schools are not selective in who they hire as teachers. Private schools can, indeed, often be very selective in their choice of teaching candidates, but they far less frequently use licensing criteria associated with professions. They are, however, not uniform in this indicator of professionalization. There are distinct differences in the use of these hiring criteria among private schools, depending upon their orientation. Catholic schools, in particular, are far more likely than other private schools to require certificates and tests of their new hires. For instance, in 2011-12 69 percent of Catholic school teachers were fully certified, as compared to 41 percent of non-Catholic private school teachers.

Induction

In addition to initial formal training and preparation, professional work typically requires extensive training for new practitioners upon entry. Such training is designed to pick up where pre-employment training has left off. That is, while credentials and examinations in many professions are usually designed to ensure that new entrants have a minimum or basic level of knowledge and skill, induction programs for practitioners are designed to augment this basic level of knowledge and skill. As a result, entry to professions typically involves both formal and informal mechanisms of induction—internships, apprenticeships, or mentoring programs. Sometimes these periods of induction can be prolonged and intensive, as in the case of physicians' internships. The objective of such programs and practices is to aid new practitioners in adjusting to the environment, to familiarize them with the concrete realities of their jobs, to socialize them to professional norms, and also to provide a second opportunity to filter out those with substandard levels of skill and knowledge.

In the teaching occupation, the mentoring, apprenticeship, and induction experiences have been the subject of much discussion among reformers. The teaching occupation has long been plagued by high attrition rates among newcomers (Ingersoll, 2012), and, reformers argue, one of the best ways to increase the efficacy and retention of new teachers is to better assist them in coping with the practicalities of teaching, of managing groups of students, and of adjusting to the school environment.

The data suggest these attempts at professionalization have had some success: over the past two decades the numbers of schools with assistance programs has increased. Our background analysis of the data shows that in 1990–1991 in the public sector about one half of first-year teachers participated in formal induction programs of one sort or another. By 2011-2012, this had increased to 88% (see Table 21.1). The proportion of beginning teachers in private schools who participated in formal induction programs has been lower than that for public schools, but this percentage has also dramatically increased over the past two decades. However, the data also show that induction programs vary widely in the number and kinds of activities and supports they include. The most comprehensive include a wide range of components, such as mentoring by veterans, structured planning time with teachers in one's field, orientation seminars, regular communication with an

administrator, a reduced course load, and a classroom assistant. Moreover, importantly a growing body of empirical research has shown that induction has positive effects on beginners' classroom teaching practices, on their retention, and on their students' academic achievement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Table 21.1 Level of Teacher Professionalization in Schools, by Type of School

	Public	*Public, Low Poverty*	*Public, High Poverty*	*Private*
Credentials				
% teachers with full or regular certification	91	91	90	50
Induction				
% beginning teachers participating in induction program	88	92	87	64
Professional development				
% schools providing teachers with time for professional development activities	99	99	99	94
% teachers participating in professional organization activities	94	93	96	83
% teachers receiving funding for professional development activities	51	53	51	57
Specialization				
Mean % in-field teaching	77	81	71	58
Authority				
Over teacher hiring				
% schools with influential board	23	18	25	28
% schools with influential district staff	32	29	33	–
% schools with influential principal	91	92	88	94
% school with influential faculty	27	27	27	33

Over teacher evaluation				
% schools with influential board	13	11	15	16
% schools with influential district staff	26	27	28	–
% schools with influential principal	94	93	94	95
% schools with influential faculty	19	22	20	18
Compensation				
% schools with retirement plan	94	90	94	59
Mean starting salary ($)	35,800	38,933	34,845	26,531
Mean maximum salary ($)	62,691	65,295	58,566	41,272

Source: Original analyses by the authors of the U.S. Department of Education's nationally representative *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS). To date, seven independent cycles of SASS have been completed: 1987–1988, 1990–1991, 1993–1994, 1999–2000, 2003–2004, 2007–2008, and 2011–2012 (see Cox et al. 2016). The SASS data presented here are primarily from the 2011–2012 cycle, with the exception of the second indicator of teacher professional development, from the 2003–2004 SASS, authority indicators from the 2007–2008 SASS, and the indicator of in-field teaching, from the 1993–1994 SASS. Low poverty refers to schools where 10% or less of the students receive publicly funded free or reduced price lunches. High poverty refers to schools where more than 50% do so.

Professional Development

Beyond both pre-employment basic training and on-the-job induction for beginners, professions typically require ongoing in-service technical development and growth on the part of practitioners throughout their careers. The assumption is that achieving a professional-level mastery of complex skills and knowledge is a prolonged and continuous process and, moreover, that professionals must continually update their skills, as the body of technology, skill, and knowledge advances. As a result, professionals typically belong to associations and organizations that, among other things, provide mechanisms, such as periodic conferences, publications, and workshops, for the dissemination of knowledge and skill to members. Moreover, professionalized workplaces typically both require and provide support for employee development. These include on-site workshops, financial support for conferences, course work, skill development, and sabbaticals.

Professional development has been one of the most frequently discussed and advocated teacher reforms in recent years. Again, the data present a picture of success in the provision of support for, and teacher use of, professional development.

Data on three indicators of teacher professional development are displayed in Table 21.1: the percentage of schools that provided professional development programs for the teaching staff during regular school hours; the percentage of teachers who participated in workshops, seminars, or conferences provided by their school

or by external professional associations or organizations; and the percentage of teachers who received financial support for college tuition, fees, or travel expenses for participation in external conferences or workshops during that school year.

What is striking about the data on professional development is the consistency across schools. Most schools, both public and private, provide professional development, most teachers participate in workshops or activities either sponsored by their schools or sponsored by external professional organizations, and most teachers also receive financial support of some sort for external professional development activities. These data are an impressive set of indicators of this aspect of professionalization. However, they, of course, do not tell us about the quality or length of these professional development programs and activities.

Specialization

Given the importance of expertise to professions, it naturally follows that one of the most fundamental attributes of professions is specialization—professionals are not generalists, amateurs, or dilettantes, but possess expertise over a specific body of knowledge and skill. Few employers or organizations would require heart doctors to deliver babies, real estate lawyers to defend criminal cases, chemical engineers to design bridges, or sociology professors to teach English. The assumption behind this is that because such traditional professions require a great deal of skill, training, and expertise, specialization is considered necessary and good. In contrast, the other part of the assumption is that nonprofessions and semiskilled or low-skill occupations require far less skill, training, and expertise than traditional professions, and hence specialization is assumed less necessary.

Despite the centrality of specialization to professionalization, there has been little recognition of its importance among education reformers, even among proponents of teacher professionalization. Indeed, some school reformers have argued that teacher specialization, especially at the elementary school level, is a step backward for education because it does not address the needs of the "whole child," unduly fragments the educational process, and hence contributes to the alienation of students (e.g., Sizer, 1992).

To assess the degree of specialization in teaching and the degree to which teachers are treated as professionals with expertise in a specialty, we examine the phenomenon known as out-of-field teaching—the extent to which teachers are assigned to teach subjects that do not match their fields of specialty, preparation, and training. Out-of-field teaching is an important but little understood problem. Many researchers and reformers assume, wrongly, that out-of-field teaching is due to a lack of training or preparation on the part of teachers. The source of out-of-field teaching lies not in a lack of pre-employment education or training on the part of teachers, but in a lack of fit between teachers' fields of preparation and their teaching assignments once on the job. Out-of-field teaching is a result of misassignment—when school principals assign teachers to teach subjects in which they have little background. It is important because otherwise-qualified teachers may become highly unqualified when assigned out of their fields of specialty.

Assessing the extent of in-field or out-of-field teaching is one way of assessing the importance of professional specialization in the occupation of teaching—it provides a measure of the extent to which teachers are treated

as if they are semiskilled or low-skilled workers whose work does not require much specialized expertise or, alternatively, as if they are professionals whose work requires expertise in a specialty. Table 21.1 presents a measure of in-field/out-of-field teaching we have developed—the average percentage of secondary-level classes in which teachers do have at least a college minor in the fields taught (Ingersoll, 1999).

The data show that an emphasis on specialization in one's area of expertise often does not hold in secondary-level teaching. Teachers at the secondary school level are assigned to teach a substantial portion of their weekly class schedules out of their fields of specialty. For example, in public schools, teachers, on average, spend only about three quarters of their time teaching in fields in which they have a college major or even a minor. Further analyses of the data show there has been little change in these levels in recent decades.

This lack of specialization is more widespread in high-poverty schools. But, again, these comparisons are overshadowed by public-private differences. Private school teachers are far more often assigned to teach subjects out of their fields of training than are public school teachers—just over half of a private school teacher's schedule is in fields for which the teacher has basic training. However, there are differences among private schools (not shown here). Teachers in nonsectarian private schools have higher levels of in-field teaching than do teachers in other private schools. On average, teachers in nonsectarian schools spend about two thirds of their schedules teaching in field; in contrast, in-field levels in religious private schools are lower —about half their class loads.

Authority

Professionals are considered experts in whom substantial authority is vested, and professions are marked by a large degree of self-governance. The rationale behind professional authority is to place substantial levels of control into the hands of the experts—those who are closest to and most knowledgeable of the work. Professions, for example, exert substantial control over the curriculum, admissions, and accreditation of professional training schools; set and enforce behavioral and ethical standards for practitioners; and exert substantial control over who their future colleagues are to be. Sometimes this control is exerted through professional organizations. For instance, gaining control over (and sharply limiting) medical school admissions by the American Medical Association was a crucial factor in the rise of medicine from a lower-status occupation to one of the pinnacle professions (Starr, 1982). Professional authority and control are also exerted directly in workplaces, and as a result, professionalized employees often have authority approaching senior management when it comes to organizational decisions surrounding their work. In the case of hospitals, physicians traditionally have been the senior management. Academics, for another example, often have substantially more control than university administrators over the hiring of new colleagues and, through the institution of peer review, over the evaluation and promotion of members and, hence, over the ongoing content and character of the work of the profession.

The distribution of power, authority, and control in schools is one of the most important issues in contemporary education research and policy. Indeed, this issue lies at the crux of many reforms, such as teacher empowerment, site-based management, charter schools, school restructuring, and teacher leadership. But this issue is also a source of contention. Some hold that schools are overly decentralized organizations in

which teachers have too much workplace autonomy and discretion. Others hold the opposite—that schools are overly centralized in which teachers have too little influence over school operations. Part of this confusion arises because of differences in the domain analyzed; most focus on how much autonomy teachers have in their classrooms over the choice of their texts or teaching techniques. Others focus on how much power faculties collectively wield over school-wide decision making, such as budgets (Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll & Collins 2018). Here we focus on faculty influence over two issues traditionally controlled by professionals—peer hiring and peer evaluation.

Table 21.1 displays the frequency of schools across the United States in which principals report the school board, the district staff if in the public sector, the faculty, and the principals themselves to have substantial decision-making influence over two activities—staff evaluation and hiring. The data paint a picture of a steep organizational-level hierarchy, with principals at the top.

Overall, principals clearly view themselves as powerful actors in reference to decisions concerning teacher evaluation and hiring and view teachers as among the least powerful actors. In comparison to principals, boards and district staff far less frequently have authority over these school decisions, at least from the viewpoint of principals. In every kind of school, principals report faculty to be influential far less often than they are themselves. Teachers are also less often influential than district staff over these issues. However, in comparison to school boards, teachers' professional authority is more often higher in both public and private schools.

Consistent with conventional wisdom, the hierarchy in some ways is less steep in affluent than in poor public schools; faculty in poor schools are less often reported to be influential, especially over hiring, and boards are more often influential. But, especially over hiring, private school teachers are less often empowered than those in public schools, counter to conventional wisdom that private school teachers are delegated more workplace influence than public school teachers (e.g., Chubb & Moe, 1989).

Compensation

Professionals typically are well compensated and are provided with relatively high salary and benefit levels throughout their career span. The assumption is that, given the lengthy training and the complexity of the knowledge and skills required, relatively high levels of compensation are necessary to recruit and retain capable and motivated individuals.

Teacher salaries have been a much discussed topic amongst teacher reformers. But, unfortunately, data on teacher salaries have often been misleading. Teacher salary analyses typically focus on the average salary levels of teachers of particular types or in particular jurisdictions. Comparing average teacher salaries for different kinds of teachers or schools can be misleading because teacher salary levels are often standardized according to a uniform salary schedule, based on the education levels and years of experience of the teachers. Especially with an aging teaching workforce, it is unclear if differences in average salary levels are due to real differences in the compensation offered to comparable teachers by different schools, or are due to differences in the experience and education levels of the teachers employed. That is, schools with older teachers may appear to

offer better salaries, when in fact they do not.

A more effective method of comparison across schools is to compare the normal salaries paid by schools to teachers at common points in their careers. Start-of-career salary levels provide some indication of how well particular kinds of workplaces are able to compete for the pool of capable individuals. End-of-career salary levels provide some indication of the ability of particular kinds of workplaces to retain and motivate capable individuals. The ratio between starting salaries and end-of-career salaries provides some indication of the extent of opportunity for promotion, and the range of monetary rewards available to employees as they advance through their careers.

Table 21.1 shows data on the normal starting and maximum teacher salaries offered by different kinds of districts or schools in the 2011-2012 school year. Of course, salary data such as these quickly get "old" due to inflation. However, our analysis is concerned not with absolute salary values, but with comparisons—which have shown little change over time. We make four comparisons: how salaries vary across different types of schools; the ratio between teachers' start-of-career and end-of-career salaries; how beginning teachers' salaries compare with those of other recent college graduates; and, finally, how teachers' annual salaries compare to those in other occupations. These are revealing comparisons to make and get at the status of teaching as a profession. Data on the provision of retirement benefits are also displayed.

Consistent with conventional wisdom (Kozol, 1991), there are differences in the compensation afforded to teachers in public schools. In particular, public schools serving high-poverty communities pay less than schools in more affluent communities, especially for experienced teachers. But the differences between public and private schools are even greater. Teachers in private schools are paid far less than teachers in public schools, and also are less likely to be provided with a retirement plan by their school. The average starting salary for an individual with a bachelor's degree and no teaching experience was about 25% more in public schools than in private schools. Moreover, the public-private salary gap widens as teachers progress through their careers. The average maximum salary (the highest possible) was 50 percent more than for private school teachers. We also found that among private schools, there are large differences in compensation. Non-Catholic religious private schools pay their starting teachers a salary that is just above the official federal poverty line. Teachers' salaries, in both public and private schools, are also "frontloaded." The ratio of teachers' end-of-career to start-of-career salaries in Table 21.1 is less than 2 to 1. This is far less than for many other occupations and traditional professions. Frontloading suggests limited opportunity for financial gains, can undermine long-term commitment to an occupation, and can make teaching less attractive as a career (Lortie, 1975).

In order to place teachers' salaries in perspective, it is useful to compare them to the salaries earned in other lines of work. Traditionally teachers have long been called the "economic proletarians of the professions" (Mills, 1951), and the data continue to bear this out. Different data sources have long documented that the salaries of new college graduates who have become teachers are considerably below those of new college graduates who chose many other occupations. For instance, data from the nationally representative 2008-09 *Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study* show the median salary (in 2010, one year after graduation) for

college graduates who became teachers was below the median for all college graduates. Graduates working in business were paid 20 percent more than teachers, those working as nurses were paid 34 percent more, and those working as engineers were paid 57 percent more than their peers working as teachers (Cataldi et al. 2011).

These differences remain throughout the career span. For instance, data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics have long shown that the average annual salaries of teachers have been far below those of traditional professionals, such as college professors, scientists, pilots, veterinarians, accountants, pharmacists, architects, and lawyers.

Prestige

Professions are high-status, high-prestige occupations. In other words, they are respected and admired. Prestige and status, unlike salary, power, or professional development, at first glance, might seem very difficult to empirically assess because they are highly subjective. But, like other attitudes, public perceptions of which kinds of occupations are more or less prestigious can be assessed, and indeed, for more than 50 years, sociologists have studied how the public evaluates the relative prestige of occupations. Table 21.2 presents some of the results from one of the best-known studies of occupational prestige. These data are useful to illustrate how the status of teaching compares to other occupations and also to compare the relative status of different levels of teaching. The data clearly show that, as expected, the traditional professions are very prestigious. Teaching, like many of the other female-dominated occupations, is rated in the middle. Teaching is less prestigious than law, medicine, and engineering, but it is more prestigious than most blue-collar work, such as truck driving, and pink-collar work, such as secretarial work. The status of teaching changed only slightly over time in this study. Both elementary and secondary teaching went up in prestige, but kindergarten and preschool teaching went down. The result is a distinct status hierarchy within the teaching occupation; secondary teachers are slightly higher status than elementary teachers. Both are substantially higher status than kindergarten and preschool teachers.

Table 21.2 Relative Prestige of Selected Occupations (ranked by 1972 scores)

	Score	*Score*		*Score*	*Score*
Occupation	*1972*	*1989*	*Occupation*	*1972*	*1989*
Physicians	82	86	Funeral directors	52	49
Professors	78	74	Athletes	51	65
Lawyers	76	75	Bank tellers	50	43
Judges	76	71	Police	48	60

Physicists and astronomers	74	73	Secretaries	46	46
Dentists	74	72	Mail carriers/postal service	42	47
Architects	71	73	Plumbers	41	45
Aerospace engineers	71	72	Tailors	41	42
Psychologists	71	69	Carpenters	40	39
Chemists	69	73	Barbers	38	36
Clergy	69	69	Bakers	34	35
Chemical engineers	67	73	Truck drivers	32	30
Secondary school teachers	63	66	Cashiers	31	29
Registered nurses	62	66	Painters/construction/maintenance	30	34
Elementary school teachers	60	64	Cooks	26	31
Authors	60	63	Waiters and waitresses	20	28
Pre-K/kindergarten teachers	60	55	Maids	18	20
Actors and directors	55	58	Garbage collectors	17	28
Librarians	55	54	Janitors/cleaners	16	22
Social workers	52	52			

Source: From Davis, J., & Smith, T. (1996). *General social surveys, 1972–1996: Cumulative codebook*. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center.

Implications

This chapter attempts to ground the ongoing debate over teacher professionalization by evaluating teaching according to a series of classic criteria used to distinguish professions from other kinds of work. The data show that, on the one hand, almost all elementary and secondary schools do exhibit some of the important characteristics of professionalized workplaces. On the other hand, and despite numerous reform initiatives, almost all schools lack or fall short on many of the key characteristics associated with professionalization. Clearly, teaching continues to be treated as, at best, a "semi-profession" (Etzioni, 1969; Lortie, 1969, 1975).

But there are also large variations in the degree of professionalization, depending on the type of school. Consistent with conventional wisdom, low-income schools are, in a number of ways, less professionalized than are the more affluent public schools. The most striking differences are those between public and private schools. The teaching job in private schools is in some important ways less professionalized than in public schools. Moreover, there are distinct differences within the private sector, often overlooked in public-private comparisons. Our background analyses show that in most ways, the least professionalized of schools are non-Catholic religious private schools. This has important implications for current school reform and policy. As school choice programs continue to expand, movement toward a more privatized system may result in changes to teacher professionalization, an often overlooked aspect of the policy debate.

These data raise some obvious questions. What difference does professionalization make for those in schools? What are the implications of variations among schools in professionalization? To be sure, research and reform concerned with teacher professionalization typically assume that professionalization is highly beneficial to teachers, schools, and students. The rationale underlying this view is that upgrading the teaching occupation will lead to improvements in the motivation, job satisfaction, and efficacy of teachers, which, in turn, will lead to improvements in teachers' performance, which will ultimately lead to improvements in student learning. If we accept this assumption—in other words if we assume that professionalization attracts capable recruits to an occupation, fosters their expertise and commitment, and, ultimately, provides assurance to the public of quality service to the public—then these data do not yield a reassuring portrait of the teaching occupation.

This logic and these assumptions seem reasonable enough. Indeed, equivalent arguments are regularly used by proponents of professionalization in any number of other occupations and also by defenders of the status quo in the traditional professions. However, just as in other occupations and professions, very little empirical research has ever been done to test such claims. It is difficult to find, for instance, empirical research examining the direct effects of the relatively high levels of training, power, compensation, and prestige accorded to physicians and professors.

It is important, however, to ask these kinds of questions because proponents of professionalization, in teaching and elsewhere, ignore an important stream of literature in the sociology of work, occupations, and professions that illuminates the downside to professionalization. For instance, medicine, long considered among the pinnacle professions and the clearest example of work that has successfully become professionalized over the past century, has been the subject of a great deal of criticism. The focus of this criticism is the

negative consequences of the power and privilege of professionalization—monopolistic control over medical knowledge and the supply of practitioners, antagonism toward alternative medical approaches, and a power imbalance in the physician-client relationship (e.g., Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 1986; Starr, 1982). From this viewpoint, professionalization in medicine has brought many benefits, but it also incurs costs. The implication of this line of thought is that it is important to distinguish both the benefits and costs of professionalization and also to specify to whom both of these apply.

In other research projects, we and colleagues have analyzed the effects of various indicators of professionalization on various outcomes—specifically on teachers' job satisfaction, on school climate, on teachers' rates of retention and turnover, and on student academic achievement (see, e.g., Ingersoll, 1997, 2003, 2012; Ingersoll & May, 2012; Ingersoll & Collins 2018). We have found that most of the above indicators of professionalization are, indeed, associated with positive outcomes. Several indicators of professionalization, however, particularly stood out for their strong positive effects: teachers' authority, autonomy, and decision-making influence; and induction and support for new teachers.

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READING 22

Perils and Promises

Middle-Class Parental Involvement in Urban Schools

Maia Bloomfield Cucchiara and Erin McNamara Horvat

While the roles they play are unofficial, parents can have an incredibly powerful influence on the organization, culture, and effectiveness of the schools their children attend. Their roles can range from supporting their children outside of school to raising money and influencing the day-to-day operations of schools. Here, Maia Bloomfield Cucchiara and Erin McNamara Horvat consider the roles that parents can play in school, as they focus their ethnographic eyes on two schools in urban Philadelphia. They show that involvement on the part of affluent parents can either create additional advantages for their own children or create opportunities for their own children while also creating broader opportunities that are shared by a diverse group of students.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why did the parents at Grant and Monroe approach their involvement in such different ways?
2. Quite a few of the selections in this book involve comparative ethnography—in-depth examination of two schools/research settings. What do researchers gain from this comparative approach?
3. How should school officials respond to highly involved parents like those at Grant? What should their role be in "managing" parental involvement?

For several decades, urban public schools in the United States have been associated with low-income populations and with chronic poor performance (e.g., Anyon, 1997; Kantor & Breznel, 1992; Rury, 2005). The latter is often attributed, at least in part, to the tendency of school districts to be unresponsive to the concerns of low-income constituencies (Anyon, 1997; Kantor & Breznel, 1992; Noguera, 2003). Yet some middle-class families also use urban public schools, and given the recent "back to the city" movement (Birch, 2005) and the economic crisis (Rogers, 2009), they may become an increasing presence in urban districts.

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While no substitute for adequate funding or community empowerment, the presence of middle-class families in urban schools might nevertheless be beneficial. Public institutions frequently are more responsive to constituencies possessed of the "sheer political clout" that tends to come with middle-class status (Noguera, 2003, p. 33). With their higher levels of cultural, material, and social capital, middle-class parents could secure badly needed resources and raise standards for students and educators alike (Kahlenberg, 2001; Varady & Raffel, 1995). In fact, efforts are ongoing in several large cities to attract and retain middle-class families to

the public schools, both to help improve the schools and to prevent middle-class flight to the suburbs (Cucchiara, 2008; Jan, 2006; Lipman, 2004, 2008; Smith & Lupton, 2008). However, middle-class parental involvement also has a troubling underside: These parents' efforts can be narrowly focused and informed by exclusive notions of class, leading to greater levels of inequality within and across schools (McGrath & Kuriloff, 1999; Wells & Serna, 1996).

Our study contributes to the growing conversation about middle-class parental involvement in urban schools by asking why and with what consequences middle-class parents send their children to urban public schools. Using comparative qualitative case studies of two elementary schools, we find considerable variation in the approach taken to parental involvement. Parents' orientations fall along a spectrum, ranging from a strongly individualistic focus at one end to a quite collective focus at the other. Moreover, these orientations cluster by school. At one site, parents tended toward the more *collective* end of the spectrum, expressing a commitment to the well-being of all children and a belief in the intrinsic value of diversity. At the other site, parents took a more *individualistic* approach, targeting their efforts mostly toward their own children and expressing a normative view of social class and an interest in improving the school by attracting more middle-class families.

Our data suggest that middle-class parents do indeed bring myriad resources to urban schools and can be important catalysts for change. A comparative analysis reveals, however, that collective approaches are more successful in improving school experiences for all children in the long run. We also find that middle-class parents' efforts, when focused only on their own children or on attracting other middle-class families, can be harmful and alienating to working-class and poor children and their families.

Methodology

This is a comparative analysis of two data sets, designed as an examination of similarities and differences in middle-class parental involvement in urban public schools. It draws from two separately conducted case studies of middle-class parents in racially and economically diverse elementary schools (K–8) in the downtown area of a large northeastern city we refer to as Brickton.[1] … We used qualitative methods since their ability to capture participants' interpretations and document local processes and dynamics were best suited to our research goals. One study is ethnographic; the other, focusing on a school that had experienced significant middle-class parental involvement since the 1970s, combines an oral history approach with some participant observation. The historical component of this design is particularly useful in revealing the ways in which parents' activities and meanings are shaped by their social experiences and by the time-specific context in which they operate… .

The research at Grant was undertaken as an ethnographic investigation of middle-class parental involvement in a diverse urban school… .

The research at Monroe was intended to understand the role parents, particularly middle-class parents, played in transforming the school from a low- to a high-performing institution… .

The Case Studies: Grant and Monroe Schools

Grant Elementary School serves nearly 500 kindergarteners through eighth graders in downtown Brickton. Grant is located in Cobble Square, one of the city's oldest neighborhoods. Homes and buildings date back to the city's colonial era; several streets are still paved in cobblestones; and large, brick townhouses lend an air of refined dignity to shady streets. Real estate values in Cobble Square are far higher than in the rest of Brickton… .

Because Cobble Square is an affluent neighborhood, and because Brickton's school district—which serves a largely disadvantaged and minority population and has a history of low student achievement as well as chronic fiscal shortfalls—is often avoided by residents who can afford other options, most Cobble Square families send their children to private schools. At the same time, since Grant has a good reputation in Brickton, each year hundreds of students from across the city apply to transfer to the school. During the 2005–2006 school year, 51% of Grant students lived in the catchment area; transfer students were largely African American and came from low-performing schools.

During the study period, a group of middle-class parents, mainly from Cobble Square, were trying to increase the number of "neighborhood" children at the school. In this context, the term *neighborhood* referenced middle-class (or upper-middle-class) status. Parents hoped that a critical mass of such families would bring resources and demands for higher quality, thus making the school more appealing to other neighborhood families and ushering in a cycle of parental involvement and school improvement… .

Table 22.1 Data Sources by School

Data Sources	*Grant*	*Monroe*
Interviews		
Parents	14	21
Teachers/administrators	7	11 (including school secretary)
Former students	0	2
Total no. of interviews	21	34
Race/ethnicity of parent sample		
White	5	16
African American	7	5
Asian	2	0

Class status of parent sample		
Middle class	9	17
Working class or poor	5	4
Race/ethnicity of teachers/administrators		
White	4	10
African American	3	1
Observations		
No. of hours	200	25
Activities observed	PTO meetings, PTO-sponsored events, school fund-raisers, classrooms, school arrival/dismissal, prospective parent tours, student performances, spring carnival	Harvest Day celebration, winter concert, spring musical, Play Day, Home and School meetings, school dismissal, prospective parent tours
Documents analyzed	School publications, newspaper coverage, school website, PTO minutes, school district documents	School publications, newspaper coverage, school website

Note: PTO = Parent Teacher Organization.

Grant parents' campaign to attract more middle-class families from the downtown area coincided with the Downtown Schools Initiative (DSI), a partnership between a local business organization and the school district. DSI was designed to bring downtown professional families into the public schools— thereby adding to the area's appeal, slowing middle-class flight to the suburbs, and furthering downtown revitalization… .

Table 22.2 Grant and Monroe Demographic Data, 2005–2006

Demographic	*Grant*	*Monroe*
Total student population	490	414
% African American	42	40
% White	12	50

% Asian	41	5
% Latino	3	4
% Low income (district average: 73%)	47	46

The second case study site, Monroe Elementary School, is also a large (417 students) K–8 institution located in Brickton. Its neighborhood has long been home to both artists and public housing projects. The area's streets are narrow and tree lined, with homes that date to the early 1800s as well as ones built by developers in the 1980s… . A few blocks from the school, there is a commercial strip of stores, restaurants, and other businesses. Around the corner sit a well-maintained playground and tennis court. Two major arts organizations also are located in the neighborhood.

Monroe was selected for study because of the remarkable strength of the school community and its unique 30-year history of parental involvement… . The school is now at capacity, enrolls a racially diverse population, and reports results on the state's standardized assessment tests that are significantly above the district average… .

Differences in Motivations, Goals, and Consequences of Parental Involvement

We focus our discussion of Grant and Monroe on four dimensions of parental involvement: parents' motivations for becoming involved, their conceptualizations of diversity, their goals, and the consequences of their efforts. While there were certainly variations within each school in parents' understandings and actions, the variation *across* the two schools on each of these dimensions was quite striking… .

Parents' Motivations: Involvement for Whom?

At both Grant and Monroe, involved middle-class parents were interested in making significant improvements to their children's schools. In both cases, the parents were aware that the schools their children attended had limited funds for physical, instructional, and programmatic amenities; and in both cases, parents hoped to use their resources as professionals and members of the middle class to create changes. However, parents at the two schools differed in how they talked about their efforts and, particularly, in whom they saw as the primary beneficiaries. If the Monroe and Grant parents' approaches could be placed on a spectrum, with involvement focused solely on one's own child at one end and involvement targeted entirely toward all students in the school at the other, Grant parents would occupy the more individualistic end and Monroe parents the more collective.

Parental involvement at Grant: "For my child."

Parents at Grant wanted to add new programs, replace an unpopular principal, and make significant improvements to the school's infrastructure. When they described their involvement and plans for the school, they discussed these changes in relation to their own children's needs and interests… . They were trying to

make the school "good enough" to permit them to continue sending their children there. In this context, benefits for other children were seen as a happy result of their efforts, but they were not considered the main point.

A focus on one's own children was naturalized at Grant to such an extent that parents invoked it without hesitation. For example, in discussing their reasons for joining the PTO, parents said they became involved primarily because it was good for their children. As one White middle-class mother explained, "I really did it for [my son], 'cause I know how much he enjoys seeing me around the school." The dominance of this perspective was evident also in a teacher's comment. Describing the middle-class parents' work, this longtime teacher observed, "I mean, as a secondary interest, they want to see the school do well. But their primary focus —it comes with the territory. It comes with being a parent. You know." Though their efforts did in many cases benefit all students, parents generally spoke of this as a corollary benefit rather than as the main purpose… .

This focus on one's own children did not go unchallenged. Several low-income African American parents who were very involved with Grant's PTO expressed frustration many times that the PTO (led by middle-class parents from Cobble Square) tended to focus its energies on the younger grades, where most of the middle-class children were enrolled. For example, when a Cobble Square mother acknowledged that a new tutoring program she was promoting would not place any volunteers in Grades 7 and 8, an African American mother from outside the downtown area spoke up: "We have to make sure we're supporting all the grades. This is only for K–6. Once again, we're not affecting the upper grades." Though the tutoring program never materialized, two of the PTO's major efforts—the reading program and a new playground—both targeted younger students. A middle-class mother acknowledged this as a concern. When asked how her activities and those of other middle-class parents affected students, she mused,

> Anyone that contributes in any way, I think, helps… . [When] I looked around at the faces of the people that were involved, a lot of them were involved in the younger grades or in kindergarten… . It helps kindergarten. It may have helped first grade. Did it help the seventh graders? Probably not. Did it help the eighth graders? I don't know. On average, did it help the average kid? I don't know.

This deliberately pragmatic stance epitomizes the general understanding at Grant regarding motivations for parental involvement… . As a result, the benefits these parents brought to the school were not expected to reach very far beyond their own children or their children's immediate peers.

Parental involvement at Monroe

"So that all kids are enriched." Involved middle-class parents at Monroe also viewed their efforts as helping their own children, but at the same time, they were committed to securing resources or advantages for the school as a whole… .

The collective nature of involvement at Monroe can be seen most clearly in how parents approached their volunteer work and which programs they sought to implement. For example, because they believed the work

being done at the school was too important to abandon, many parents continued to volunteer at Monroe after their own children had moved on. A teacher who had been at the school from 1986 to 2001 described a pervasive sense of responsibility. She noted with approval what she saw as parents' beliefs that middle-class families should become involved in urban public schools:

> Okay, so if everyone who is White, who is educated, who has some money pulls their kid out of city schools, what happens to those city schools? Well, we know, let's be realistic, and do we have a responsibility? There I think we do.

A parent from the 1990s applied this philosophy to curriculum and instruction as well, arguing that programs for mentally gifted students should be implemented in a way that benefited all students. This comment is particularly striking because it shows a parent with a child already in the gifted program struggling with the tension between advancing her own child's interests and wanting to share enrichment with all children:

> I thought mentally gifted should be an enrichment that comes into the classroom, not pulling the kid out of the classroom, Meaning they can come in, they can enrich a program, and that the kids who really are performing above, they can take out for short times to do additional work on the same topic. So that all the kids are enriched by it.

In contrast to research that has documented middle-class parents' interests in maintaining and even increasing within-school hierarchies (McGrath & Kuriloff, 1999; Sieber, 1982; Wells & Serna, 1996), this parent expresses a viewpoint that elevates collective goals above individual ones… .

Of course, not all parents shared these values. At times, some had more individualistic motivations. For one of the early "pioneer" parents, concern about her child took precedence over more global goals. Her explanation for becoming involved at Monroe was quite similar to those provided by many Grant parents:

> Well, I was doing it very selfishly. It was for my family, my group. Which, of course helped other people … Because my main goal was not to—well, in a way it is, to improve society. Because if you improve society you've got to improve yourself. But I was focusing on doing it for [my daughter], for her education.

Note that even while articulating a more individualistic stance, this parent also makes a connection between individual and collective good, rejecting the notion that the two are in opposition… .

Decades after the first generation of involved middle-class parents, the collective nature of parental involvement at Monroe remains strong. As the African American mother who was copresident of Monroe's Home and School Association in 2005 explained,

> The parents want to also be involved because it helps the children. You don't get the parents that just come in the classroom and just want to help with their child. They want to help with all of the children.

The fact that parents at Monroe still reference their interest in benefiting all children at the school—despite the many ways that our society has moved away from the idealism of the 1960s and 1970s—is testament to the persistence of the unique ethos that developed at the school.

Parents' Conceptions of Integration and Diversity

Middle-class parents in urban public schools are aware of the ways in which their children differ from many of the students in their classrooms. Class and race are key issues, and parents' understanding of them affected their choice of school and the activities they undertook after enrolling their children. These actions, in turn, had significant consequences for the schools and students. As we discuss in the following sections, there was a great deal of interschool variation in how parents thought about diversity and integration.

Grant: The special status of middle-class families

A powerful discourse circulated at Grant that positioned middle-class families as central to school improvement efforts… . parents and teachers spoke frequently of the ways in which middle-class families could benefit Grant. A teacher explaining her support for the PTO's effort to increase the number of "neighborhood" (middle-class) families at the school, said,

> When you're dealing with an affluent neighborhood, you're dealing with parents of interest. They care! As opposed to other areas. It sounds horrible, I know it does. But that's it. Realistic. I mean, that's the way it is. So if the common sense here is that if the neighborhood children came to this school and it's an affluent neighborhood and it's caring parents, then all the parents that send the children here would care about their children, the education, and maintaining Grant to where it's a very good learning environment.

Similarly, a parent (and former school district employee) perceived the presence of middle-class families as "obviously," and strongly, positive:

> Obviously, children who come from affluent families have more of an advantage [over] students who come from poor families… . They're more willing to listen, more willing to learn. Whereas the children from not-so-advantaged homes, they don't tend to care about education as much. They just want to play… .

Many middle-class parents and educators saw the benefits of economic diversity as flowing in one direction only—*from* the middle-class students and their parents *to* the other children.

Middle-class parents' activities at Grant focused heavily on the task of attracting more families "like them" to the school. They reached out to potential parents in the neighborhood and at local playgrounds, they held special events for "neighborhood families," and they were very concerned about how prospective parents viewed the school. These efforts were discussed often at PTO meetings and other school functions. For example, parents erupted into spontaneous applause when, at a meeting with the district superintendent, a mother announced that a dozen neighborhood families were enrolling their children. As this same mother later explained, her goal was to generate a "critical mass of involved parents" who would respond to seeing "an educated family who looks kind of like them" using the school. In this discourse, middle-class families benefited the school simply by sending their children there, because any such family's involvement could attract other, similarly advantaged families, who would also help make the school better and attract still more families… .

Monroe: The benefits of public school diversity

Middle-class parental involvement at Monroe emphasized the value of racial and social class diversity. This emphasis appears to have been rooted both in a basic respect for and appreciation of difference and in parents' interest in preparing their children for success in a diverse world… .

During a joint interview, a couple who had been involved in the school in the 1970s spoke at length about their views on the value of diversity:

> It was also for my kids to benefit from them [the non-White, non-middle-class students], too. I wanted my kids to have every, to just, this was their city. These were their people. These were—they may be different, yes, they're different, isn't that great. Learn about that. Embrace it… . I wanted my kids not to grow up in this little world that protected them so much. (Mother) …

> Susan [her daughter] feels she is a good social worker because of her experience growing up. She says, "I know the people. I know the stories… . and I can go into anybody's house." She's got a certain savvy and a street smart to her. (Mother)

These parents believed that the years their children spent at Monroe helped them feel comfortable and competent in diverse urban environments. In addition, they credited Monroe for having contributed to their children's professional success by giving them important forms of capital… .

Valuing diversity, according to many parents, resulted in an enhanced sense of community and inclusiveness. They perceived the environment at Monroe as nurturing all children at the same time that it celebrated differences. A middle-class mother who was involved with the school from 1986 to 2000 spoke very fondly of her children's experiences:

> They [her children] felt a sense of community. They felt like they belonged. They had got to know people very different from themselves. Cross-class and cross-race. And that mix of people, wealthier

> and poorer all together, was very important. It was very nurturing. It nurtured their spirits on some level.

Importantly, parents like this one did not see themselves or their children as having had to *overcome* the challenge of a diverse student body. Rather, it was diversity that made Monroe a desirable choice… .

Parents' Goals for the Schools

What did parents want for their children's schools? How did they talk about their goals and how did they pursue them? Parents at both Grant and Monroe wanted "good" schools for their children; where they differed was in what "good" meant and in how they could make the schools "better." At Grant, parents' goals focused largely on enhancing the school's market position, with the idea that this would make it more attractive to other middle-class parents, who would further improve the school. At Monroe, in contrast, parents drew on their experiences with the civil rights movement—or from the civil rights movement as a symbol—to articulate their goal of creating a vibrant, urban community.

Improving Grant: The power of markets

Middle-class parents at Grant had clear and ambitious goals for the school. As one mother explained, they wanted it to be "the kind of school it needs to be to cater to Cobble Square." Given their assumption that an influx of middle-class families would lead to improvements, much of parents' work at the school was done with an eye to attracting such families… .

In addition to their frequent references to marketing or public relations strategies that would make the school appealing to middle-class families, when middle-class parents discussed substantive improvements to programs or facilities, they also tended to see these school improvements through a marketing lens as well. For example, a middle-class mother who was instrumental in bringing a "cybrary" to Grant explained that she was invested in the project mainly because of its power to attract other middle-class parents to Grant—what she referred to as the new library's "interior curb appeal" and "wow quotient." She was pleased that children who did not have access to computers or libraries would benefit from the cybrary, but that, she said, was "a collateral benefit," not a primary goal. The cybrary and similar improvements were important instead because they would add to the school's appeal in the educational marketplace… .

Believing, not unreasonably, that district administrators were often unresponsive to Brickton public school parents because so many were low income and not adept at "working the system," middle-class parents at Grant used implicit and explicit shows of status to demonstrate that they were a more powerful constituency that could not be ignored.

Improving Monroe: Thinking globally, acting locally

At Monroe, parents' involvement was linked to a larger vision for social change. They wanted to show what was possible when different groups came together around a common good. They wanted to create a diverse school that could be a model for other urban schools, and, more generally, they hoped to build a diverse

community that embodied the richness and possibilities of urban life.

In talking about their efforts, these parents frequently referenced the social movements of the 1960s as the source of their faith in citizens' ability to create change. The idea of working in a school as a way to create broader social change is a sentiment shared by Monroe parents from all eras, but it was particularly true of the "pioneer parents," those who sent their children to Monroe in the late 1970s… . At once a set of ideas, a shared experience, and a rallying cry, the 1960s-era social movements shaped parents' goals for the school and also served as a symbol to parents as they thought and talked about their actions… .

Monroe parents' vision for the future had a markedly urban character. They wanted the school to be a model of collaboration across lines of class and race, but they also wanted to reclaim the city as a place to raise children and create community. The early 1970s was a particularly difficult moment in Brickton's history, one characterized by racial strife and inner-city blight. During that time, parents' decision to send their children to an all-Black public school was, as one father put it, "a statement of faith in the City of Brickton, that's for sure … very clearly a political statement." Another parent, who had two children enrolled at Monroe during the study, explained that he saw the city as uniquely suited to this sort of activism:

> I think a lot of like-minded people getting together can effect positive social change. And I think that is one of the most fantastic things about living in the city and having a point to rally behind. And what better place to rally behind than a public school?

Parents at Monroe believed that by "rallying" behind a school, they could contribute to the creation of a more vibrant, nurturing city and help ensure the viability of the urban life they so valued.

Consequences for the Schools

… At both Grant and Monroe, middle-class parents donated untold hours of their time as well as significant personal resources to the schools. They felt strongly and spoke passionately about their involvement. Yet the consequences of their efforts were by no means clear-cut. In fact, while our data lend some support to arguments about the benefits of middle-class parental involvement, they also illuminate unintended—and inequitable—consequences.

Grant: A complicated story

Consistent with the literature on class and parental involvement, middle-class parents at Grant were quite successful at bringing new resources and programs to the school. But these resources came at a cost. They negatively affected a group of largely low-income and minority students and their families. Because Grant had a good reputation in the district, large numbers of students who lived outside the catchment area (and outside the downtown altogether) transferred to Grant as a way of escaping low-performing neighborhood schools. The majority of students who transferred to Grant from other schools—and, particularly, those from outside the downtown area—were African American… . When parents and educators spoke of the value of attracting more middle-class families to the school, this group of transfer families was the implicit *other* against which

middle-class virtue was compared, and their status at the school was depressed by the involvement of middle-class parents… .

However, parents' efforts to attract more middle-class families to the school had a negative impact on low-income, African American students, especially transfer students. During an interview, a teacher argued that the campaign to attract middle-class families stigmatized low-income and minority students. She described an incident that occurred during an open house for prospective parents. A sixth-grade class, lining up just outside the school, was behaving in a loud and disorderly way:

> And the two parents who were running—and this class is predominantly Black, I would say, Black and Asian—and, you know, it was two White parents who were running the open house, and they came *flying* and they said, "You've gotta get these kids in the building! The parents are coming!" And so, I mean, it was obvious: They're Black, these White parents are coming.

In her view, this incident communicated to the students that—because of their racial status—they were not valued at the school:

> The kids are not stupid. They know… . They knew that these potential parents were coming, they knew that they were putting on a show, you know? And that [the message was] "You're not as important." And I mean, it doesn't take—people get to that conclusion before they can think of words… .

In addition, some parents encouraged the school to limit intake of transfer students. According to an administrator at Grant, "behavioral issues" spurred these parents to push for a reduction in the number of children who transferred into the school under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)… . since these students did not live in the catchment area, they were "guests" in the school and not entitled to be at Grant. As these actions and reactions make clear, by pursuing a vision for Grant that depended largely on changing the student body, middle-class parents contributed to the marginalization of an already vulnerable population.

Monroe: A collective tradition

Middle-class parents at Monroe—like those at Grant—were able to use their higher levels of social, cultural, and economic capital to bring resources to the school; advocate on the school's behalf at the district level; and collaborate with school staff to support various programs and projects. As one parent involved in the 1970s put it, "I do remember how influential we were as parents. It was like, when we went to the school board, we were empowered." This "empowerment" continues. Recently, middle-class parents at Monroe played an important role in working with the district to address a budget crisis and in renovating the school's library. The school is now one of the highest performing in the city, known for its strong arts program; racial and economic diversity; and motivated, activist parents… .

Parents also worked to provide assistance to families who needed it. A former president of the Home and

School Association from the middle years recounted,

> One of the policies we created at Monroe was we did a book fund so that books were on—that kids' lost books, we could replace them so that parents weren't necessarily responsible, because so many parents couldn't do that. We did any trips, any special programs; all a parent had to do was come to the Home and School and say, "I can't afford it," or say to a teacher, "I can't afford it," or a teacher came to the Home and School and said, "I know this family can't afford it." We'd ask no questions and they would get it covered… .

Thus, in contrast to Grant, the benefits of middle-class parental involvement at Monroe more often reached all students. In addition, middle-class families have remained a constant presence over the years. Whereas longtime observers at Grant spoke of the parents who participated in the study as representing yet another "wave" of involved, middle-class families, middle-class involvement at Monroe was—to push the metaphor—more like a river. Its course was set many years ago by the first generation of parents, and it has flowed steadily ever since, to the benefit of thousands of students… .

Discussion

The idea that middle-class families could help improve urban public schools has a strong pragmatic appeal. Decades of efforts by educators, administrators, policymakers, researchers, and politicians to reform urban education have met with disappointing results. Why not test the possibility that the actions of a motivated, influential parent constituency could succeed where others have failed? Our study shows that this idea does have merit. The data indicate that the presence of a significant number of middle-class families in a school has the potential to bring important resources to cash-strapped schools and important benefits to low-income student populations. But our data also challenge the sometimes simplistic discourse around middle-class parental involvement by showing that it may not create widespread improvement. We found that middle-class parents' efforts can contribute to increasing inequality in the very same schools their actions sometimes benefit.

In each case study school, there was evidence of some variation among parents' motivations and perspectives. Still, in each, an overall ethos was easily discernible. At Grant Elementary, middle-class parental involvement was largely characterized by an individualistic orientation, a normative view of social class, and a focus on attracting more middle-class families to the school. Though Grant parents believed they were having a positive impact on the school, the benefits of their efforts were less widespread or long-lasting than at Monroe because of the ways they—individually and collectively—thought about their involvement and set their goals. While parents did make positive contributions, their work also reinscribed status hierarchies, elevating the middle class while marginalizing low-income students and their families. In addition, their commitment to the school was relatively fragile. The same parents who spoke of being "ads" for the school moved their children elsewhere after spending only a few years at Grant. At Monroe, parental involvement was much more collective. There, a commitment to the well-being of all children and a belief in the value of diversity and social justice were considered just as "natural" as the focus on one's own children was at Grant. As a result, the presence of middle-class families at Monroe more often benefited all children, and collectively oriented middle-class parental involvement has persisted over several decades… .

Note

1. All proper names in this article are pseudonyms. In some cases, we have also changed identifying information to protect the confidentiality of our informants.

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READING 23

Make Students Part of the Solution, Not the Problem

Trevor Gardner

In many ways, students are the focal point of the educational system. In terms of their manifest functions, schools are designed to assist in the social and educational development of students. Yet historically, students have exerted very little influence over this process. They have almost no control over the formal curriculum or the day-to-day functioning of the school. This piece by Trevor Gardner considers what happens when students are given more control over their lives in school—in this case, by looking at their roles within disciplinary processes at schools. Across the country, school districts are exploring the ways in which "student justice panels" can, in the words of Gardner, make students part of the solution rather than the problem when it comes to disciplinary issues at school.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why, according to Trevor Gardner, do students not abuse the power that they have in student justice panels? What compels them to want to balance their responsibilities with the interests of both their peers and school officials?
2. Some research has found that student justice panels are more effective than suspensions when dealing with disciplinary issues. Why do you think that may be the case?
3. If researchers wanted use the power of comparisons to learn how student justice panels may work differently in different kinds of schools, what types of schools would they select as research sites to see how the local environment influences the effectiveness of the panels?

Amid the chaos of lunchtime, a lone apple flies across the lunchroom, over tables, through conversations, and slams against the door on the other side of the room. José, the aspiring pitcher begins to laugh, a stratified moment of jubilation with two or three friends near him who were in on the scheme. Their laughter quickly fades as the boys realize Ms. Johnson, the principal, has caught them in the act. As she approaches, José turns his back in feigned ignorance. Even though Johnson literally watched as the shiny green apple was released from his hand, José denies throwing it. (The names of students, staff, and The City School are pseudonyms.)

From "Make Students Part of the Solution, Not the Problem," by Trevor Gardner, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 96(2), pp. 8–12. Copyright 2014 by Phi Delta Kappa International. Reprinted with permission.

Now 17, José has experienced enough encounters with authority in school and beyond to know that the first response to getting caught must be to deny culpability. Johnson quickly grows frustrated. The confrontation escalates. A few minutes later, José is leaving the principal's office to begin his five-day suspension.

This scenario, repeated in some form thousands of times every day at schools and in classrooms across the country, was the first incident taken on by the newly formed Student Justice Panel (SJP) at The City School, a small charter school in San Francisco. The SJP was the product of teacher leadership and pressure to move

toward a more restorative and responsive approach to student discipline. The initiative had considerable ideological support from several teachers but lacked a clear road map on how to apply this discipline philosophy in the day-to-day life of school.

Core Values

The City School (TCS) is a public charter high school serving about 400 students in San Francisco, one of a network of three schools established in 2002 with the mission of "transforming the lives of students, especially those who will be the first in their family to attend college, by preparing them for success in college, in careers, and in life." City School students reflect the diversity of San Francisco and come from every neighborhood in the city. There are about 20 educators teaching grades 9–12.

The Student Justice Panel (SJP) is a restorative justice model of school discipline, the purpose of which is to uphold the school's Core Values by working to restore damaged relationships between individuals and the community. The SJP is made up of about 12 student leaders nominated by their teachers and peers and is based on the beliefs that:

- TCS believes strongly in maintaining our Core Values of discipline, growth, community, justice, and respect;
- Each individual at TCS is responsible for the community as a whole; and
- TCS functions best when students take leadership and are given a strong voice.

SJP hearings consist of an adult facilitator, the community members involved in the violation of the Core Values, and at least four SJP representatives. Parents/family members may also be present, depending on need. Petitioners and respondents can also request to have additional student advocates present. Everyone at the hearing, including the respondent, will propose and discuss consequences aimed at restoration, and the SJP will decide on a course of action.

The shift toward restorative justice at TCS was largely a bottom-up movement. Although administrators were nominally supportive of the push, they were not the engine behind the change. The fuel for the changes came from a few teacher leaders, including myself, and eventually from students. This continues to be a challenging dynamic at the school, where there never seems to be enough time or resources to do work like restorative justice. Furthermore, the relationships and individualized attention needed to properly integrate a restorative discipline model often clash with the "sacrifice some for the good of the whole" doctrine that drives many school discipline policies. But this is a discussion for a different article.

The City School is by no means a place that relied heavily on punishment and removing "bad students" to maintain its school culture. Every adult in the building genuinely wants to do what is best for the young people they serve. However, like many schools with similar missions and goals related to equity, social justice, and college readiness, TCS faced a critical disconnect between what we wanted and what was actually happening as a result of school discipline policies and practices. We wanted to be true to our Core Values:

> *Community*—We work hard and take responsibility for the success of all members of our community.
> *Respect*—We seek to see the best in each other and treat one another with dignity.
> *Justice*—We are empowered agents of change for social justice and equity.

We wanted to help students transform mistakes and bad choices into learning experiences. We wanted to create a school culture in which students learned to discipline themselves and each other so that referrals, suspensions, and expulsions would become the exception instead of the rule. But watching José walk out of the building reminded me that we were far from reaching these goals. We had so much work to do.

After the Apple Is Thrown

When members of the Student Justice Panel learn José has been suspended for five days for what students considered an innocuous act of playfulness, their justice meters go into "oh, hell, no" mode. After school that day, four SJP members rush into my classroom, filled with urgency and outrage.

"They can't suspend him for five days for throwing an apple," one shouts.

After several minutes of questioning and analyzing the incident and the response to it, I agree that the SJP has a responsibility to raise its voice and respond to the apple incident.

I tell the SJP students that the first step in supporting José is communicating their perspective to principal Johnson. She is reasonable, and I believe she also wants to do right by students. "Let's go down there right now," shouts Nicole. "I don't care if she is busy; she needs to do something about this."

I remind Nicole that Ms. Johnson is not our enemy and that if we approach her as though she is, we won't get anywhere. "Don't forget Ms. Johnson was actually very supportive of the SJP. We don't want to lose that support by coming at her disrespectfully," I offer my opinion to the group.

"I want to take her to the Student Justice Panel," Nicole exclaims. "Why does she think she can do this?"

"Requesting that Ms. Johnson come before the SPJ is actually an option," I reply. "But for now let's focus on the situation with José and how we are going to get Ms. Johnson to listen to us."

Deondre steps in. Typically a quiet and reflective student who keeps his thoughts to himself, Deondre is a leader who students trust to be honest and just. "We need a proposal that makes it clear why we think this is unfair. If we just rush into her office yelling at her, she will never hear us," he said. "And José did throw an apple across the cafeteria. Let's not front like he didn't do anything wrong."

Deondre's reasoning calms them and sends them into planning mode. They huddle around a desk and start to build their plan. I step back and listen, offering a few suggestions, but really just letting them work it out. After about 10 minutes, they're excited about their next step, but they still don't fully trust that the Student Justice Panel process is real or that Ms. Johnson will listen to them.

This is a common dynamic in schools: Adults have all the power, and students must be obedient and respectful—even when they are right (and righteous) in the face of injustice. This is the dynamic that leads to so many students blowing up over incidents that begin small. After many years of schooling, students have learned that the teacher's word is taken as truth, and their perspective won't matter. Being told to move seats or getting a detention for repeatedly talking can often lead to screaming at a teacher, storming out and slamming a door, or throwing a fit because that is their only source of power. They have seen models of struggle—from *The Maury Show* to the contentious political climate—that value temper tantrums and threats of violence to win one's point. And they employ these competently when they find themselves powerless in classroom situations.

What makes the SJP so transformative is the shift in the dynamics of power it represents. Many schools have structures that are intended to encourage students to have a voice. But SJP actually has the authority to affect and even change school discipline decisions and policies. At The City School, any community member can bring another member of the community before the SJP for violating any of the school's Core Values; this includes students who have called teachers before the SJP. This can be extremely useful when a teacher is trying to reason with a student who is about to explode because of a perceived unfairness. The teacher can remind the student that she is not powerless in that situation but that her power does not lie in yelling and demonstrating anger. Her power lies in her peers, who will be the ultimate arbiters of justice in the Student Justice Panel.

The apple incident will be the test to see if the SJP is real. Is the school really willing to give students a voice in some discipline decisions? To be honest, as a teacher and lead organizer of the SJP, I'm not completely certain myself if the school leadership is willing to give up that kind of power. But we will give it a try.

The Meeting

Two of the SJP representatives, who were elected weeks before by peers in their advisory classes, go to Ms. Johnson's office to make an appointment to discuss the incident and their feelings about José's suspension. Ms. Johnson is game. The next day, Ms. Johnson meets with the four SJP members who initially raised the issue, myself, and the assistant principal of school culture.

Equally surprised, nervous, and excited, the four students gather in my room after school to discuss how to approach the meeting and what to ask for. They decide the fundamental issue is not that José is being punished for his actions but that the punishment does not fit his "crime." During the conversation, they realize that José has the main responsibility in restoring the situation. They agree that throwing the apple was wrong and that he needs to have consequences. But a five-day suspension won't accomplish anything except to push him further behind in his schoolwork and make him even angrier about coming to school. Furthermore, using José as an example is unreasonable. The SJP group decides to ask Ms. Johnson to allow José to return to school the next day, having served one day of his suspension, on three conditions. José:

- Writes a letter of apology to the janitor (who would have had to clean up his apple mess if José had not been caught);
- Stays after lunch to clean up the cafeteria for a week; and
- Writes a reflection about which Core Values he violated and what it means to be responsible for his actions at school.

It takes less than a half hour to discuss the issue and come up with these consequences. The students walk away feeling good about their proposal… .

At the meeting the next day, Deondre, Nicole, and two other Student Justice Panel students present the proposal to Ms. Johnson, making it clear why they believe their proposed actions are not only more just but actually hold José to higher expectations than simply suspending him. Ms. Johnson accepts the proposal. I can see the expressions on the faces of the four students change as they listen to Ms. Johnson's words. The Student Justice Panel is for real.

José agrees to the conditions and returns to school the next day—anything to avoid the five-day suspension. But, after a few days back, he fails to follow through on one of his commitments: staying after lunch to clean up the cafeteria.

This is a pivotal moment for the nascent SJP. Students had considered what would happen if a student didn't follow through with their restorative consequences and decided that this would trigger a return to their punitive consequences.

However, before the situation with José got to this point, students on the SJP—on their own with no adult prompting—spoke with José and convinced him that it was critical for him to keep his end of the agreement, both for his benefit and for the sake of the SJP process. In the following days, José followed through on the

rest of his restorative consequences.

This demonstrates one of the powerful unforeseen benefits of the Student Justice Panel: Students take leadership and hold each other accountable for discipline. Sure, in this situation, José wanted to avoid more days of suspension. And schools must have discipline policies with punitive consequences to ensure accountability. Students could comply with school policies to avoid being punished for their actions, or students could comply with school policies because their peers hold them to high expectations. When the high expectations approach is at play, students are investing in building and maintaining a positive and respectful school community because they believe they have the voice and the authority to do so.

In Reflection

Several years and many "apple incidents" have passed since the Student Justice Panel began. In some ways, the panel has been incredibly successful. But the growth of the SJP and restorative discipline has met many challenges, and we are still struggling to implement these practices on an institutional level. Only a few of these challenges emerge from a lack of ideological support for the philosophy and practices. Often the challenges come in the form of resources. If we only consider time and school resources, sending José home for five days and forgetting about him until he returns is much easier than investing in the work required to transform his actions and his thinking, which is the goal of restorative discipline.

But given the connection between school discipline, dropouts, and the school-to-prison pipeline, the implications are critical. We owe it to José. We need to care deeply enough about his education and his humanity to invest in developing restorative discipline models that thrive in our schools and not simply operating systems that punish students when they make poor choices, like throwing apples when the principal is watching.

Projects for Further Exploration

1. Using some of the variables from the first reading on principals, plan and carry out an interview with a principal, and write up your findings about the role of the principal. How closely do your interview findings coincide with Lortie's discussion of the principal's role?
2. Using an academic database like JSTOR or Google Scholar, find the latest research on a topic related to teachers' roles that was described in the reading by Ingersoll and Collins on the status of teaching. Restrict your search to refereed journals.
3. Conduct some research with current or recent high school students about the type of roles and responsibilities they hold in their high schools. You might conduct interviews or examine a school's website. Investigate the formal and informal authority they hold, whether in student justice panels, student council, or other designated positions.

Chapter 6 What We Teach in Schools: Knowledge for What and for Whom?

Knowledge is the base of all education. Without knowledge to impart to students, there would be no justification for schools, even though education fills many other functions in a society. Knowledge and knowing are basic social elements in all societies. The readings in this chapter examine the social construction of knowledge and how it comes to be taught and learned in schools. What knowledge is appropriate and what knowledge is included in the curriculum are determined by a number of both input and output factors as illustrated in the open systems model. For example, social reproduction theorists would argue that the knowledge taught in schools reflects the perspectives and views of those in power in society and the outputs are the appropriate knowledge for one's station in life, thus reproducing the social class structure. The study of knowledge provides another way of thinking about how social forces shape what is taught in our schools.

Researchers often consider the social context of educational institutions and people's educational experiences and trajectories. Rarely, however, do they consider what is meant by knowledge or how it comes to be taught and learned. When we consider knowledge, we assume that there are truths and that our educational systems are teaching those truths. The readings in this chapter make us think about these assumptions. Indeed, the reading by David Tyack suggests the knowledge that we teach in schools is negotiated within a variety of social and political constraints—for example, religious beliefs and political philosophies—thus, the social construction of knowledge is very much a part of the process of education in society. Tyack's analysis of history textbooks suggests that knowledge is created in society, particularly by those in power. The second reading by Richard Lachmann and Lacy Mitchell uses theory to explore changes in textbooks' depiction of World War II and the Vietnam War over time.

In this introduction, we explore different approaches, both past and present, that theorists have used to study knowledge. One way to view knowledge is to investigate it as a characteristic of persons—such as viewing someone as knowledgeable or smart (Swidler & Arditi, 1994). Knowledge can be seen as a private good, something that one uses to enhance oneself or one's status in life. However, some societies see knowledge as a public good that can be used to benefit society as a whole. For example, Thomas Jefferson argued that in order to have a good, working democracy, the populace must be educated. As discussed in Chapter 1, functionalists emphasize that schools are expected to produce individuals with the capabilities, attitudes, and orientations necessary to function in society. Thus, knowledge is viewed as a component of our everyday world—something that frames people's expectations for themselves and others. All of these approaches to knowledge affect schools; each perspective views knowledge as something that individuals use to interpret their worlds, something that shapes their orientations to others and their place in institutions in society, such as schools and work.

Theories also relate to the production of knowledge (Swidler & Arditi, 1994). These theorists see the role of authority and power in knowledge production as part of a stratification process that maintains and reproduces inequality. As discussed in the first two readings in this chapter, knowledge is sold to schools, and textbooks

are the final product in the production of knowledge. However, the process by which knowledge is sold to schools is very complex, as Tyack describes, with many segments of the population influencing what is contained in the final "product" or the textbook that our children read. In 2014, the Phoenix Board of Education voted to remove two pages from a biology textbook "because they discuss sexually transmitted diseases and contraception, including milepristone, a drug that can be used to prevent or halt a pregnancy" (Rojas, 2014). As Tyack discusses in this chapter, the blandness of history and other textbooks is the result of the political pressure on textbook companies to produce textbooks that appeal to and can be sold to everyone and offend no one. Ideally, we should all be able to agree on one common core of knowledge; however, in reality, that rarely happens. Current efforts to develop a common curriculum are ongoing and more successful in countries outside the United States (Levin, Schwartz, & Gamoran, 2012).

Another approach to studying knowledge focuses on the authority to define it and examines the organizational practices that shape knowledge, as well as the structure and relations of power (Swidler & Arditi, 1994). This approach focuses on the development and use of authority, who gets to define what is "knowledge." The structure producing knowledge is important here, including the level of the social organization of knowledge or the power of the individuals within that organization. For example, knowledge is now situated in colleges and universities in developed countries, and there are structures defining who is "knowledgeable." Yet in other societies at different times, knowledge was embedded in the church, and those knowledgeable were clerics. At the more macro level of social organization, the production of knowledge within this framework is embedded in how society is organized to define legitimate authority. In most modern societies, we define knowledge within the context of formal institutions, as opposed to apprenticeships or applied learning. Therefore, college professors in civil engineering have more authority in defining how bridges are to be built than the contractors who put up the bridges.

If we further examine the organizational structure of knowledge, we can focus on an analysis of the gatekeepers who work to generate and select knowledge. It is not surprising to find that many of the major scientific advances in history were discovered years before they were acknowledged as "discoveries." Thomas S. Kuhn (1970), in a classic book on *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, developed the idea of shared paradigms within the scientific community. That is, prestigious scholars and scholars at prestigious universities, often the same people, have the authority to define what is known within their disciplines. They share paradigms of what is known and are generally unwilling to have their paradigms challenged. Kuhn argued that "normal science" seeks confirmation, not disconfirmation of its theories. Because scientists are more concerned about maintaining their forms of knowledge than with discovering new forms of knowledge, a significant number of disconfirming findings must occur before gatekeepers allow new forms of knowledge to be recognized.

Pierre Bourdieu takes a different approach, examining how power creates knowledge or how those in power can manipulate knowledge (Swidler & Arditi, 1994). In this explanation, those who hold power in society also shape knowledge. Individuals with *cultural capital* fit the expectations of those in power in schools and, thus, have more power themselves. This is because they both understand and have access to the social and cultural artifacts and knowledge that are most valued in society. In fact, individuals get to define knowledge and can

create ideologies or belief systems that support and maintain their positions of power. Powerful people may be involved in financing the organizations or politicians that support these individuals in their causes, which would support Bourdieu's argument that the rich and powerful manipulate knowledge (Swidler & Arditi, 1994). How it is that textbooks are developed to portray knowledge that reflects some people's worldview and not others' is a multilayered social puzzle, reflected in textbook boycotts and bans on books in schools dating back to the 1950s and 1960s, with an increase in censorship activities beginning in the 1980s (DelFattore, 1992). Tyack, in the first reading in this chapter, defines this as a political struggle.

DelFattore (1992) and others argue that undue influence on textbook publishing leads to the "dumbing of America" because publishers are pressured to present "knowledge" that is acceptable to many diverse audiences. She, as does Tyack in this chapter, describes states where textbooks are purchased at the state level for all students. Decision making is consolidated as administrators in these states either set down standards for textbook publishers or refuse to adopt textbooks unless they have the option of rewriting sections of the books of which they do not approve (DelFattore, 1992). The decision of what textbook to purchase is highly profitable for the publisher whose textbook is selected. As a result, the selection process in a very few states shapes textbooks for the remaining states. Knowledge, therefore, as Tyack argues, is oftentimes embedded in politics rather than education.

A growing body of literature on pedagogy, or the process of teaching, addresses these concerns at all levels of education. Initially, the focus of this literature was on introducing knowledge of women and other cultures into classrooms. Advocates of multiculturalism and feminism focus not simply on inclusion of women and nonmajority groups into the curriculum but also on the ways in which these groups are presented. These groups are part of the political pressure to shape textbooks.

Another concern in the sociology of knowledge includes the effect of new technologies or the mode of delivery of knowledge. Technology has been growing at a pace far faster than ever before in history (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Swidler and Arditi (1994) discuss the impact of moveable type and the printed book on the social construction of knowledge. There is less theoretical speculation about the changes that current technologies may have on the way we formulate knowledge. Cyberspace is a large frontier that enters the classroom, both formally and informally, as more and more students from preschool through college own and use computers. Wenglinsky (2005/2006) argued that the computer-to-student ratio went from 1 to 20 in 1990 to 1 to 5 at the end of that decade, creating a revolution in how knowledge was delivered to students in the classroom. He used national data to assess the impact of the use of technology on student achievement and found that students did better when computers were used for higher-order thinking such as to write papers and generate ideas rather than for drill and practice exercises (Wenglinsky, 2005/2006). Therefore, the technology itself is not as important as how it is used in the classroom. Whether technology transforms the way we think and use knowledge is still open to question. Tyack and Cuban (1995) feel that technology and computers may be the innovations that could change education in the future. However, many questions remain. We will just have to wait to see if knowledge becomes more anonymous when it comes to us through a computer and whether teaching and learning will respond to technology's speeding up the process of generating knowledge.

Technology is not the only potential controversy in terms of how knowledge is constructed in classrooms. The reading by Harold Wenglinsky in this chapter discusses the impact of testing for accountability on the way knowledge is taught (do we teach basic facts or critical thinking?) and the effects of teaching methods on learning. Standardized test performance become the means by which schools are made accountable for educating students (Walker, 2017). While the subjects taught may be the same, standardized tests can shape the way materials are presented to students and ultimately affect the depth of understanding of what we learn in school.

At the conclusion of this chapter, we hope you are more aware of the complexity in the process of constructing and presenting knowledge and the impact of those processes on how we define the reality of children. An important part of the social organization of knowledge is that knowledge is perceived to be legitimate and provides a shared understanding of a common world. Although this seems to be a simple and straightforward matter, the readings in this chapter point to many problems and difficulties in defining what knowledge is legitimate.

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READING 24

Monuments Between Covers

The Politics of Textbooks

David Tyack

A historian of education, David Tyack turns his attention to examining the factions that have shaped the content of history textbooks in the United States. Beginning with censorship of ideas from competing politicians in the colonial United States, he highlights the various historical struggles over the content of history textbooks. This reading gives more attention to the debate as to whether to view knowledge from an epistemological (philosophical study of the production of true or adequate knowledge) versus a historical, political, or sociological examination of knowledge.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Is there a "truth" that should be contained in history textbooks? If so, why is it so difficult to publish the "truth" and make it interesting?
2. What social forces influenced the criticism of the content of history textbooks during different historical periods?
3. Do you agree with Tyack when he states that there need not be "one state-approved set of truths"?

Why are history textbooks so controversial when they are, by most accounts, so dull (Schudson, 1994)? People have generally wanted history texts to tell the official truth about the past. The search for a lowest common civic denominator has often resulted in terminal blandness, but even then critics have argued that texts did not get the public truth right. Textbooks resemble stone monuments. Designed to commemorate and *re-present* emblematic figures, events, and ideas—and thus to create common bonds—they may instead arouse dissent.

From "Monuments Between Covers: The Politics of Textbooks," by D. Tyack, *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42(6), pp. 922–930. Copyright 1999 by SAGE Publications.

By law, many states have mandated that history textbooks be nonpartisan in politics and nonsectarian in religion (Pierce, 1926). Publishers have found a consensual approach a smart commercial strategy, for disaffected citizens would not buy their books. Advertisements for the McGuffey Readers—which sold more than 120 million copies—assured potential customers that the books contained nothing offensive to any religion, political persuasion, or section of the country. In their tone of solemn certainty, early textbooks resembled catechisms of political correctness (old version), and even some recent history texts have a catechetical flavor. "Those of us who grew up in the fifties," recalls historian Frances Fitzgerald (1979), "believed in the permanence of our American-history textbooks… . Those texts were the truth of things; they were American history. They were weighty volumes. They spoke in measured cadences: imperturbable, humorless, and as distant as Chinese emperors" (p. 7).

For two centuries, Americans have generally agreed that there was a public truth that should be taught to the young, but they have repeatedly and ardently disagreed about what that truth was. In 1915, Florida legislators attacked "the so-called histories" of the Confederacy written by Northerners and offered a prize to the author who best told the "True and Correct History" (Pierce, 1926, pp. 66–67). The South had lost the Civil War but was determined not to lose this battle. They would have their own textbooks just as they had their own monuments of the War for Southern Independence. Eight decades later, a popular book bore the title *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (Loewen, 1995). It gave an opposite account of White supremacy.

No Golden Age of Consensus

Amid recent contention over multiculturalism and culture wars, some imagine a golden age in the past when there was only one story to tell about American origins and destiny. But no such consensus ever existed among Americans in all their variety. The Philadelphia riots of the 1840s over the Bible as textbook make most disputes over multiculturalism today look like minuets. For two centuries, citizens in their associations of many kinds—religious, ethnic, gendered, economic, regional, racial, and fraternal—have contested with one another about what story to tell. In status-group politics, citizens sought to enhance their own standing in the society and their representation in the public culture.

In a nation so diverse socially and economically, and with such a rich array of associations, it would have been surprising if there had not been conflict about the official truths of the textbooks. Irish complained in the 1850s that histories were anti-Catholic and in the 1920s that histories were too Anglophile. Southerners protested Yankee bias. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), beginning early in the 20th century, demonstrated that Blacks were either ignored or stereotyped in textbooks. The American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution enthusiastically pursued "the Americanization of America." Business leaders attacked the "socialistic" message in Harold Rugg's books. And labor leaders argued that unions were invisible in the textbooks. Most of the protesters—and for that matter, the textbook writers—were White prosperous males. Issues of race and gender, so salient in textbook critiques of the 1960s, arose infrequently before that time (Pierce, 1930, 1933).

As the ranks of professional historians swelled in the 20th century, historians themselves wrote textbooks and lobbied for their own brand of civic orthodoxy and historical truth in the public schools. But the American Legion and other superpatriotic groups believed that history was too important to leave to the historians. As Walter Lippmann (1928) argued in *American Inquisitors*, both these loyalty police and professional historians in the 1920s shared a commitment to truth even when they energetically disputed what that truth was.

Between the two world wars, conservative textbook lobbies like the American Bar Association, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the National Association of Manufacturers commanded considerable political clout in legislatures and local school districts. They successfully lobbied for laws requiring the teaching of American history and the Constitution. Occasionally, members of groups like the Knights of Columbus sought to represent the views of recent immigrants (Zimmerman, in press). In the past generation, outsider groups have attended to textbooks as they sought to achieve social justice through social movements. Organizations of feminists, African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos have lobbied against distortions and omissions in textbooks. Meanwhile, religious concerns have persisted, as Muslims and Jews have protested negative stereotypes, and fundamentalists have complained about humanist indoctrination in the texts.

Textbook critics used various techniques to influence the public truths taught in textbooks. They lobbied state legislatures to prescribe or proscribe content (in the 1920s, Oregon banned history books that spoke ill of the Founding Fathers). They vetted texts according to certain criteria (e.g., secular humanism or gender bias) and

publicized the results in public hearings and the media. Critics pressed lawsuits. The American Legion used its national magazine and local posts to keep track of patriotism in the schools. Politicians sometimes joined forces with ethnic associations, as in Mayor Thompson's Chicago of the 1920s, to make textbook bias a campaign issue and vote-getter (Pierce, 1933).

How much did these various protest groups and legislative lobbies actually change textbooks? It is hard to say, but scholars have found some discernable shifts in tone and content (Fedyck, 1980; Fitzgerald, 1979). The Confederate veterans and Southern historians who protested Yankee prejudices in accounts of Reconstruction contributed to a pro-White-Southern shift in textbooks in the early 20th century (no doubt publishers also wanted to add the South to their national market). Powerful groups of loyalty police during World War I and the cold war contributed to the fervid patriotism of the texts in those years. The civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s increased the attention textbooks paid to minorities and women, though often in a bland and additive rather than transformative fashion (Tetrault, 1986).

Episodes in the Politics of Truth

A variety of forces have triggered conflict over textbooks in American history: wars, immigration and other demographic shifts, religious conflicts, fears of subversion, and changing political philosophies and conceptions of citizenship. The aims of the textbook critics have differed, as have their strategies and achievements. But most activists shared these two common convictions: that textbooks should represent public truth and that existing textbooks had not gotten that truth right.

The educational intellectuals of the Revolutionary period agreed that correct political doctrines should be taught to the young and that leaders should exercise eternal vigilance against errors that could destroy liberty. If the young imbibed the wrong ideas, the republic itself was in danger. Thus, correct textbooks became essential in creating republican citizens, both leaders and followers. Noah Webster, avatar of homogenization, included catechisms of morality and civics in his famous spellers. Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence, wanted texts to give children heroes to emulate. Although he had not admired George Washington's conduct of the war, he thought it unwise to suggest that the Founding Fathers had faults, for "their *supposed* talents and virtues … will serve the cause of patriotism" (Rush, 1951, p. 388). Although Jefferson was a passionate advocate of religious and intellectual freedom, he thought it best to prescribe the political texts used at the University of Virginia and to expurgate the Tory passages in Hume's history. The republic was safe only insofar as republicans learned the same political principles. Of course, the political principles Jefferson wanted to teach were hardly those of Federalist opponents like Joseph Story, who wrote his own text to contradict Jeffersonian errors and instill an alternate version of truth (Tyack, 1966).

In the middle third of the 19th century, the crusaders who spread the common school across the nation thought that the textbook should teach the ideological *unum* that would bind together a diverse nation. Differences of class, ethnicity, race, region, religion, and political philosophy split the nation. Reformers like Horace Mann argued that the public school could counteract such fragmentation only by teaching nonsectarian and politically neutral knowledge, a common denominator of moral and civic instruction (Messerli, 1972). In constitutions and statutes, many states banned sectarian and partisan textbooks in the public schools.

For a time it seemed that religious controversies could be held at bay at the schoolhouse door. Mann and other school promoters had a simple set of propositions to justify the use of the Bible for "nonsectarian" moral instruction: The purpose of the common school is to train upright citizens; moral training of this sort must be based on religion; religion rests on the Bible; therefore, the teacher can accomplish nonsectarian moral instruction only by reading the Bible without comment. Some orthodox Protestants feared that Mann was thereby sneaking his Unitarianism into the public school, but in many parts of the country, this supposedly nonsectarian compromise, with the Bible as textbook, satisfied most citizens. One reason was that the Protestant-Republican ideology of the time so thoroughly blended politics and religion, piety and patriotism. Millennial reformers believed that the United States was literally God's country (Elson, 1964).

But Catholics disagreed, for they saw Mann's solution as sneaky pan-Protestant aggression and anti-Catholic

propaganda. Proper moral instruction required the Catholic (Douay) Bible and authoritative interpretation by the priest. If anyone needed proof that the schools were anti-Catholic, said Irish activists, all they needed to do was to look at some of the textbooks used in places like Boston or New York that featured Catholics as the anti-Christ. What's more, the textbooks arranged nationalities in a hierarchy and described the Irish in despicable terms. How could one compromise with contempt (Cross, 1965)?

In the second half of the 19th century, Catholics developed their own parochial schools where they no longer felt like outsiders and where their children could learn the truth from their own textbooks in history. The story of Irish-American history told there was heroic, and the Puritans lost the luster the Yankee texts gave them.

Like the Catholic/Protestant differences that found their way into textbooks, the split between North and South on slavery could not be papered over, even in textbooks that specialized in avoiding controversy. Southerners protested in the 1850s that their children were forced to learn from books written by Yankees hostile to slavery and Southern culture. When the Civil War came, Southerners produced a few books of their own, and by the end of the century Confederate veterans lobbied for laws (like the one in Florida) requiring that textbooks give a "true account" of the War for Southern Independence. Meanwhile, the Grand Army of the Republic pressed for its own truthful text and erected monuments to the War of the Great Rebellion. Little common denominator there (Pierce, 1930, 1933).

By the turn of the century, educational policy makers and text writers were no longer so concerned about sectional and religious conflict. Time was ripe for a new kind of progress in education, they believed, a period of scientific efficiency and moral uplift. History could document progress and give guidance to the present.

But all was not well: The massive immigration of "new immigrants" from southeastern Europe threatened this progress. They were such unpromising material, many educational leaders complained. These newcomers were illiterate, easily misled by agitators, and unaccustomed to Anglo-Saxon concepts of justice and representative government. Such stereotypes of immigrants often found their way into the textbooks their children read—no celebration of cultural pluralism or self-esteem there. But most textbooks, like most educators, did show faith that the newcomers might one day prove themselves worthy of taking part in American progress (Fass, 1989).

During World War I, conservative noneducators came to dominate policy talk about Americanization and to portray loyalty not as something assumed but as imposed on "foreigners." Employers grew panicked when immigrant labor organizers spoke to workers in Polish, Italian, or Serbian. When World War I broke out, civic leaders spoke of domestic fifth columns. As the Red scare spread, schoolchildren were even enlisted to inform on disloyal neighbors, and the word *alien* took on a distinctly unfriendly ring. The "Americanization of America" became a motto of the loyalty police (Hartmann, 1948; McClymer, 1982).

The climate of opinion, then, was favorable to a whole host of conservative activists who sought to use public schools, and specifically textbooks in American history, as instruments to enforce their own notions of patriotism. Organizations like the American Legion, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the

American Bar Association, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the National Security Council lobbied successfully in state capitols for teachers' loyalty oaths, instruction in English only, and mandatory courses in the Constitution and American history, and even sponsored their own textbooks for use in schools. Agencies of the federal government helped to coordinate these efforts and actually wrote textbooks for Americanizing immigrants (so much for local control in that era of mobilization). In this superheated patriotic atmosphere, history became an ally in the crusade. Historians eagerly rewrote school histories to illustrate the evils of the Huns and the virtues of our friends, the English.

The war was hardly over when the pro-British version of official truth became anathema. Irish and German ethnic associations and groups like the Knights of Columbus attacked the historians and their textbooks as un-American because they exalted the British. Aside from the Irish joy in pulling the lion's tail, there were many immigrant associations resentful of the demand for Anglo conformity during the war years. Critics attacked one historian because he said that the British had "returned courageously to the attack" at Bunker Hill. Tongue-in-cheek, he changed the textbook to declare that "three times the cowardly British" went back into battle (Fitzgerald, 1979, p. 35). The American Legion attacked David Muzzey, the most popular text writer of the 1920s, as an English sympathizer.

In the 1930s and 1940s, a number of textbooks began to shift to a more inclusive and welcoming attitude toward the "strangers." Experts on "Americanization," many of them second-generation immigrants themselves, came to realize that insulting the "new immigrants" was no way to absorb them into the society and that public schools were too often wedges between parents and children. Negative stereotypes of the "new immigrants" began to give way to positive textbook images of their contributions. Wartime movies in the 1940s, with their "foxhole pluralism" of ethnically mixed troops, echoed the celebration of diversity often found in the textbooks of the 1930s and 1940s (Fedyck, 1980; Tyack, 1993).

A leader in cultural pluralism in the curriculum was Rachel Davis DuBois. The American Legion denounced her, which no doubt helped her multicultural cause in some circles. Individual Black activists like W.E.B. DuBois (no relation to Rachel) and organizations like the NAACP worked to improve textbook representations of African Americans. Harold Rugg wrote an influential series of social studies textbooks that took a very different view of the "Americanization of America" from the Anglo-centered views of most 1920s texts. He saw Americanism as the enlargement of social justice, welcomed cultural diversity as a virtue not a threat, and adopted a more inclusive concept of citizenship that welcomed the underdog and the outsider to the pages of his texts (Olneck, 1990).

Rugg's broad definition of Americanism and his left-liberal views on the economy made him the bête noire of conservatives in the Hearst Press, various business organizations, and patriotic societies. They wanted history to reflect traditional interpretations of the nation-state. Their well-publicized attacks on Rugg effectively destroyed the market for his liberal textbooks (Fitzgerald, 1979). When Senator McCarthy tried in the 1950s to root out subversive people and subversive ideas, in education and elsewhere, he had plenty of precedent. Efforts to police loyalty have been common in periods of stress like World War I and the cold war, and some textbooks from each era reflected the prevailing draconian definitions of patriotism.

Criticism of textbooks in the 1960s and 1970s came increasingly from the left of the political spectrum, although the right was still organized and vocal. Activists in the civil rights and feminist movements complained that the public truths of the textbooks were radically wrong for they omitted or distorted the experience of excluded and oppressed groups. History was not just a story of the exploits of White male politicians and generals (Apple [& Christian-Smith], 1991; Cornbleth & Waugh, 1995; Schlesinger, 1991).

Demands for representation in texts coincided with the flourishing of social history "from the bottom up." Once marginal as fields of inquiry, African American and women's history have entered the mainstream of historical scholarship. The history of immigration and the working class have also enjoyed a resurgence. Scholars wishing to develop multicultural approaches in American history gained rich resources on which to draw (Nash, 1995).

Traditionally sensitive to criticism, not to say timid about it, textbook publishers have rapidly added images and stories about women and minorities. Scholars and activists have complained, however, that previously excluded groups have appeared not as main characters in the narrative but as figures in sidebars and illustrations. Surveys of high school textbooks have generally found that the development of the nation-state is still the master narrative in most books. And an ingenious study by historian Michael Frisch (1989) shows that the old icons (like George Washington, Betsy Ross, and Abraham Lincoln) are the people who spring to the minds of his college students when they are asked to free associate about historical figures through the Civil War.

Whither Textbooks?

Today a noisy confusion reigns about what stories the textbooks should tell. Worries abound about old truths betrayed and new truths ignored. Many groups want to vet or veto what children learn, and it is unclear what roles teachers, parents, ethnic groups, historians, and others should play (Schlesinger, 1991). Tempers rise. In New York debates over a multicultural curriculum, Catherine Cornbleth and Dexter Waugh (1995) observed, "Both sides engaged in a rhetoric of crisis, doom, and salvation" (p. 79).

In the United States, unlike most other nations, private agencies—publishing companies—create and sell textbooks. Thus, commerce plays an important part in deciding which historical truths shall be official. So does politics (Schudson, 1994), for public agencies decide which textbooks to adopt (about half of the states delegate text adoption to local districts, and the rest use some form of state adoption). For all the conventionality of the product, the actual production and sale of textbooks is a somewhat risky business. It is very expensive to create and print textbooks, and the market (the various agencies that actually decide which to adopt) is hard to predict. In addition, at any time some citizens are likely to protest whatever messages the texts send (Fitzgerald, 1979; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988).

Thus, it is not surprising that textbooks beget textbooks. To control risk, companies find it wise to copy successes. It has been easier to add to the master narrative than to rethink it [and] easier to incorporate new content into a safe and profitable formula than to create new accounts. Old icons (Washington) remain, but publishers respond to new demands by multiplying new state-approved truths. Current American history textbooks are enormous: 888 pages, on average (Loewen, 1995, p. 279). Publishers often seek to neutralize or anticipate criticisms by adding topics.

The traditional American fear of centralized power, salient today in debates over national standards and tests, has resulted in a strange patchwork of agencies and associations—textbook companies, state and local governments, lobby groups of many persuasions—to choose and monitor the public truths taught in the texts (Delfattore, 1992). One of the most rapid ways of changing what students learn in American schools is to transform the textbooks, but the present Rube Goldberg system of creating and selecting textbooks makes such reforms very difficult although occasionally fine texts do appear (Stille, 1998).

What might be some strategies to cope with the cross-cutting demands on history textbooks? These are some possibilities:

- muddling through with modest improvements,
- turning over the task of writing textbooks to experts,
- giving parents choices about what their children learn,
- subsidizing ethnic and racial groups to write their own group-centered books, as in Afro-centric programs, or
- devising texts that depart from the model of state-approved truths and embrace instead multiple perspectives… .

Those are some current ways of coping with choices about textbooks. In earlier times, decisions seemed simpler. Noah Webster was so certain about how to produce good citizens that he wrote a political catechism to accompany his texts. David Muzzey assumed that political and military history—read, White males running the polity—was the stuff of history. But today, the scholarly subfields of social history blossom, while many previously ignored groups demand a place in the public culture. History today is hardly a catechism. Instead, it resembles pieces of a sprawling novel with diverse characters and fascinating subplots waiting for an author to weave into a broader narrative.

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READING 25

The Changing Face of War in Textbooks

Depictions of World War II and Vietnam, 1970–2009

Richard Lachmann and Lacy Mitchell

This reading by Richard Lachmann and Lacy Mitchell builds on the arguments made in the previous readying by David Tyack to present a more specific and theoretical examination of changes in the depiction of two wars—World War II and the Vietnam War—in U.S. textbooks from 1970 to 2009. Their study of these textbooks uses content analysis, in which they create categories relevant to the theories they are examining and code words throughout the textbooks. For example, you will see references to the number of mentions of words such as "death." Their research points to the fluid nature of "knowledge"—that is, knowledge as presented in textbooks changes over time. In addition, they examine why such changes may occur. As you read about the theories they propose, consider the content of and factors that may have influenced what you learned as "knowledge" from school textbooks.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What changes do they find in the presentation of World War II and the Vietnam War from 1970 to 2009?
2. What do the authors mean when they say that textbooks can be sites of contention?
3. Consider how who writes a textbook may change the presentation of "knowledge" in the textbook.

How have U.S. high school textbook depictions of war changed since the 1960s? The academic literature on textbooks presents them as purveyors of a "hidden curriculum" that seeks to foster patriotism and unquestioning service to the nation (Apple 2004; FitzGerald 1979; Giroux 1981; Kincheloe 2008; Loewen [1995] 2007; Yarwood and Weaver 1988), as sites for political and ideological conflicts (Apple 1995, 2000; Moreau 2003), or as expressions of a growing world culture of individualism that is replacing group conformity (Bromley, Meyer, and Ramirez 2011). We can test competing explanations for textbook content, and for the institutional dynamics involved in their production, by tracing and comparing changes in how textbooks present World War II, the so-called good war, and Vietnam, the most controversial and least successful war fought by the United States.

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Determinants of Textbook Depictions of War

High school social studies textbooks, as part of their surveys of U.S. history, necessarily address the wars fought by the United Slates. Textbook authors, editors, and publishers choose what information and images to present and what interpretations to offer. What forces shape those choices? We present three different theories that suggest answers to this question and derive hypotheses that offer predictions about how textbook depictions of World War II and Vietnam have changed over time.

Textbooks, Patriotism, and the "Hidden Curriculum"

Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn (1997:15) assert, "In all modern nations, educators and political leaders have regarded history as a vehicle for promoting *amor patriae*, for instilling in young people knowledge and attitudes that promote national cohesion and civic pride." Textbooks contribute to these aims by making war central to historical accounts and glorifying the sacrifices of their nation's citizens while slighting or ignoring other countries' casualties. The notion that textbooks have dual goals—teaching history and fostering nationalism—jibes with the broader argument that schools have a "hidden curriculum" that "teach[es] cultural and economic values and dispositions that are supposedly 'shared by all'" (Apple 2004:59; see also Bernstein 1986; Giroux 2013). "The coverage of wars … is not accidental; it is the result of militaristic ideology" (Finley 2003:11). Militarism is fostered "by presenting an unbalanced, even false picture of war; by exaggerating the heroism, nobility and glamour associated with war" (Yarwood and Weaver 1988:91; quoted in Finley 2003:2).

The few existing empirical analyses support Apple's, Bernstein's, and Giroux's claims that U.S. social studies textbooks contain a hidden patriotic curriculum. FitzGerald (1979:131) sees continuity in U.S. textbooks from the nineteenth century to the 1970s (when she wrote her book) in their celebration of "the idea that the United States was a pure high minded nation, and a model of virtue among sinners." She finds that textbooks (with a single exception) ignored criticism of, or even debates over, the morality or efficacy of the Vietnam War. Loewen ([1995] 2007:249, 251) documents that "not one [textbook includes] photos [that] show any damage the United States inflicted upon Vietnam" and only one textbook "treats the My Lai massacre as anything but an isolated incident." Instead, Loewen finds the textbooks mainly regurgitate the Johnson and Nixon administrations' explanations for pursuing the war.

Fleming and Nurse (1982, 1988) performed the most systematic analyses of textbook treatments of the Vietnam War. Their first study examines 10 textbooks published between 1977 and 1981; their second examines 12 books adopted by Virginia high schools in 1985. They find that over time, textbooks increasingly acknowledge that President Johnson lied about the Gulf of Tonkin incident, and later textbooks amplify the theme of official dishonesty with reference to the Pentagon Papers. They find some attention to the antiwar movement but not much detail on the content of activists' critique of the war. The My Lai massacre is mentioned in ever more textbooks, but it is presented as an aberration to what textbooks depict as a high-minded, if ignorant and incompetent (and at the highest levels dishonest), war effort. Savelsberg and King (2011, chapter 3), using the same sample of textbooks as we use here, show that mentions of My Lai increase over time, but without extended discussions or pictures, and these mentions stay remarkably close to the

official story presented at the trial of Lt. Calley… .

FitzGerald and Loewen propose a mechanism to account for the pervasive militarism and nationalism in textbooks: the interaction between the few large publishing companies that produce textbooks and the state and local boards of education that demand the exclusion of controversial statements from textbooks (sometimes in response to public groups that call for censorship or pursue court suits to force the removal of a textbook [DelFattore 1992]). Profits depend on selling to as many schools as possible, and sales are precluded if a state or local board refuses to approve a textbook because it offends a constituency. Loewen, Ravitch, and Yarwood and Weaver contend that it is extremely difficult for teachers, or indeed anyone else, to challenge the distortions and militarism in textbooks. Most U.S. history teachers, unlike their counterparts in Europe or Japan, are not trained in history, having majored in education or other social science disciplines, like sociology or psychology (Loewen [1995] 2007; Ravitch 2004). Nash and colleagues (1997) agree that the absence of historians in the actual writing of textbooks since 1945, the decades Loewen's and FitzGerald's studies focus on, accounts for textbooks' high degree of consensus around how to present U.S. history and the lack of attention to disagreements among historians and in the public sphere over foreign and domestic policy. However, Nash and colleagues find that before 1945, and again beginning in the 1990s, textbooks were written by professional historians rather than curriculum specialists, and historian-authors are more likely to have a clear authorial voice and to present the harsher aspects of U.S. history.

The authors discussed in this section contend that U.S. textbooks have been consistent in their presentation of patriotic themes, and they identify mechanisms that account for this glorification of the U.S. military and minimization of criticisms of the Vietnam War, even in textbooks that mention U.S. atrocities or the antiwar movement. These authors, except for Nash and colleagues, do not carry their analyses past the 1980s, and none contemplate the possibility that the outcome of the Vietnam War, the antiwar movement, or the end of conscription might have disrupted longstanding and dominant views of the military and war. As a result, they do not consider that the relationship in textbooks between nationalism and militarism, or the hidden curriculum, might have changed since the 1970s. These authors' theories and historical accounts suggest the following two hypotheses, with the second reflecting Fleming and Nurse's findings:

> **Hypothesis 1:** Textbook depictions of World War II and Vietnam have not changed since the 1970s and continue to present the U.S. role in both wars as noble while downplaying U.S. soldiers' suffering and sacrifice and ignoring opposition to either war.
> **Hypothesis 2:** Textbooks have increased their attention to the antiwar movement since the end of the Vietnam War.

Textbooks as Sites of Contention

Scholarship from two different perspectives identifies reasons why textbook depictions of war might have changed since the end of the Vietnam War. In this section we look at works that examine textbooks as sites of contention, and in the next section we address scholars who identify sources for a growing emphasis on and respect for individualism, which can be at odds with glorification of military service and sacrifice. Both strands of scholarship make similar predictions about changes in textbooks, which we formulate as a single hypothesis

at the end of the next section.

Proponents of "critical pedagogy," while decrying the indoctrination that occurs in schools and is conveyed in textbooks, find opportunities for resistance to militarism and other supposedly dominant ideologies in both the writing of textbooks and the teaching of lessons. Apple (1995:53), for example, rejects the view that schools directly and unproblematically reflect the needs of corporations and the state and calls for recognition of "the nature of education's place in the political sphere, its relative autonomy, internal history, or diversity of the institutions" (see also Kincheloe 2008). However, most of the evidence that textbooks are sites of contention focuses on their depiction of domestic issues. Nash and colleagues (1997) find conflicts over the depiction of class through much of the twentieth century among U.S. textbook authors, as well as debates among schools and states deciding which textbooks to adopt. Moreau (2003) shows that from the Civil War to the present, various ethnic, religious, regional, and political groups have lobbied the state and local officials who select and purchase textbooks to reject volumes with opinions they dislike or to select books that include historical figures and events that glorify members of their group and their past contributions to the nation. Ward (2006) finds few criticisms of U.S. foreign policy in textbooks published from 1945 through the 1970s, while controversies over America's use of atom bombs against Japan and the overall conduct of the Vietnam War are presented in textbooks from the 1980s and 1990s… .

World Culture and the Rise of Individualism

In developing world culture theory, Meyer and his collaborators (Bromley et al. 2011; Frank and Meyer 2002:87) identify another change that they argue has affected textbooks: "World War II and its aftermath sharply shifted the balance of legitimated actorhood from nation-states to individuals in every type of polity, advancing the individual as the main element of reality and thus primary repository of legitimate roles and identities." Textbooks increasingly have "a focus on the individual human person in world, rather than national, society" (Bromley et al. 2011:557).

Bromley and colleagues (2011:551) hypothesize that textbooks have become more "student-centered" since 1970, especially in countries (like the United States) more tied to world society and "emphasizing individualism in political, economic and cultural ideologies" (p. 552). Bromley and colleagues (2011:548) focus their attention on the ways textbooks have been reworked to engage every student "as an active and engaged learner, not a disciplined subordinate."

While these authors do not themselves analyze textbook presentations of war, their approach suggests that the worldwide legitimation of "the identities and needs and choices of individual persons, not of corporate societies" (Frank and Meyer 2002:88) would lead textbooks to give less emphasis to military service because that is perhaps the prime instance when individuals are asked to subordinate their personal interests to the needs of the nation. Individualism could also influence how textbooks depict wars, shifting the focus from glorifying soldiers' sacrifice on behalf of the nation to emphasizing soldiers' suffering as individuals. Thus, we posit that world culture should lead to a shift from descriptions of battles to a focus on stories of individual soldiers' wartime experiences and suffering.

The United States abolished conscription in 1973, as did Britain in 1960 and most of the rest of Western Europe since 1990. The draft was ended regardless of whether a country engaged in wars in the post-1945 period or the outcomes of those wars (Lachmann 2013). The shift from conscripted to volunteer armed forces can be seen as a powerful indicator of states' current inability or unwillingness to demand that individuals subordinate their lives to the interests of the nation, and the numerous nations that made that transition over a span of decades suggest that cultural forces that transcend the particular consequences of the Vietnam War played a role. A world culture of individualism would have a similarly cumulative and progressive effect on textbooks. Therefore, on the basis of world culture theory, we predict that we should not see a sudden shift in textbook depictions following the end of the Vietnam War but rather a steady and gradual shift from the end of World War II, when a world culture of individualism and respect for human rights supposedly began, up through the present day.

The theories and historical accounts presented by the authors in this and the previous section suggest the following hypothesis, even though different authors identify varying causes (protests against or the outcome of the Vietnam War, the rise of critical pedagogy, or the diffusion of a world culture of individualism and devotion to human rights):

> **Hypothesis 3:** Textbook depictions of World War II and Vietnam have changed since the 1970s and focus increasingly on U.S. soldiers' suffering and sacrifice.

What Do Textbooks Say About War and How Has That Changed Since 1970?

Over the decades we examine, textbooks' coverage of the Vietnam War changed more than their coverage of World War II… . textbooks were consistent in the attention they devote to U.S. soldiers' deaths in World War II, with no change over time. The average number of words from our "death" list in each textbook's World War II chapters was consistent at six over all years from 1970 to 2009. In contrast, the number of "death" words in textbook chapters on the Vietnam War rose over the decades, from less than four to six.

Throughout the entire period, no textbook mentioned opposition to World War II (which accurately reflects the absence of antiwar sentiments after, although not before, Pearl Harbor). There was little mention of opposition to the Vietnam War in textbooks published while the war was going on. Opposition has become an increasing theme since the 1970s, continuing the trend Fleming and Nurse (1982, 1988) found in their earlier research.

Our second dataset, which counts items (paragraphs, photos, and student exercises), finds that the number of items in each textbook that mention casualties rose for both Vietnam and World War II… . As with the first dataset, the rate of change for Vietnam was much greater than for World War II. The average number of items per textbook that mention casualties rose from near 0 for both wars in 1970, to more than 10 for World War II by the beginning of the twenty-first century, to close to 20 for Vietnam in that decade. A total of 12 books for World War II and 8 books for Vietnam make no mention of casualties whatsoever. While the number of textbooks with that lacuna represents a small percentage of textbooks for each war, the lack of

mentions are concentrated in time: 11 of the 12 textbooks for World War II and 7 of the 8 textbooks for Vietnam that fail to mention casualties were published before 1982… .

The second dataset shows that textbooks' descriptions of the two wars became more negative over time… . Even in 1970, we found more items we coded as hell/personal than glorious/impersonal in the textbook chapters on both World War II and Vietnam. In subsequent decades, we found slight increases in the percentage of items that present World War II in glorious/impersonal terms, while the percentage of items that describe that war in hellish and personal terms almost doubled: By the end of the first decade of 2000, a tenth of items fell into the glorious/impersonal cell and almost a quarter were in the hell/personal cell. The increases in the two cells come at the expense of impersonal and neutral items. The change was greater, and different, for Vietnam. The number of items that present Vietnam in glorious and impersonal terms fell from 5 percent in 1970 to close to 0 percent by the 1990s, where it has remained. At the same time, the fraction of items that describe Vietnam in hellish and personal terms rose from 15 percent in 1970 to a third by 2009. In other words, while textbooks' coverage of World War II remained mixed, with both hellish and glorious descriptions in different paragraphs, textbooks' coverage of Vietnam has become unrelievedly bleak. No passages present Vietnam as glorious, and numerous paragraphs, photos, and student exercises depict the war as hellish through personal accounts that accompany the neutral and impersonal narratives of the war.

We have found a rising number and proportion of negative portrayals of World War II and Vietnam in the textbooks, but what do these items contain? There are increasing mentions and photos of death and suffering, and discussions and exercises focus on the overall costs of war. This is especially so for textbooks' Vietnam coverage. Photos of U.S. soldiers in Vietnam have become increasingly graphic. In the 1960s and 1970s, photos show helicopters over Vietnamese terrain with no humans present and fully intact U.S. soldiers. Beginning in the 1980s, textbooks include more and more photos of booby traps designed to mangle the bodies of soldiers, bloody and bandaged soldiers, soldiers crying alone with captions describing their mourning of lost comrades, and disabled veterans. At the same time, Loewen remains correct that the violence done by Americans to Vietnamese remains largely invisible in the textbooks.

For both wars, soldiers are quoted directly describing their own suffering and trauma. Vietnam also stands out from World War II in that coverage of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and veterans' issues became a key theme after the opening of the memorial in 1982. There is no equivalent discussion of memorials or veterans' continued suffering for World War II. This contrast reflects the very different evaluations of the two wars and the fact that the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., opened only in 2004 (which itself is a reflection of public attitudes and the difficulty of building a monument that acknowledges both human losses and the glory of victory). The Vietnam Veterans Memorial expressed and spurred public attention to the costs of that war (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz 1991), a focus increasingly represented in textbooks since the 1980s. That focus, in turn, deepens the view conveyed by post-1980s textbooks of the Vietnam War as too costly in lives and suffering, especially because it is not possible to balance or overwhelm the pathos of that war with the achievement of victory.

Textbook accounts of both wars have changed since the 1970s. One 1973 textbook, in a representative quote,

says,

> In 1945 the last of the island outposts of Japan fell with the taking of Iwo Jima in March and Okinawa in June. The Japanese defended these islands with almost unbelievable bravery; although Iwo Jima has an area of only eight square miles, American marines suffered over 20,000 casualties in capturing it. (Bragdon, McCutchen, and Cole 1973:680)[1]

This quote is typical of the textbook coverage of that war from the 1960s through the 1980s in that it gives no sense of how U.S. or Japanese soldiers experienced Iwo Jima or any World War II battle. Students would not be able to connect casualty numbers with any individual soldier's suffering or the grief of his family. This quote, by conveying the sense that the army as a whole sacrificed, might elicit patriotic pride, but it will not evoke pity or empathy.

Textbook presentations of soldiers' wartime experiences were dramatically different by the first decade of the twenty-first century. One textbook quotes a nurse who describes her experience in Sicily during World War II:

> Many wounded soldiers' faces still haunt my memory. I recall one eighteen year old who had just been brought in from the ambulance to the shock ward. I went to him immediately. He looked up at me trustingly, sighed and asked, "How am I doing, Nurse?" … I put my hands around his face, kissed his forehead and said, "You are doing just fine, soldier." He smiled sweetly and said, "I was just checking up." Then he died. Many of us shed tears in private. (June Wandrey, quoted in Garcia et al. 2005:363)

In a similar vein is a quote from John Patrick McGrath about the Battle of the Bulge:

> Only a few feet away, one of the men in my platoon falls… . He calls out to me. "Don't leave me. Don't… ." The tanks advance, one straight for me. I grab my buddy by the wrist and pull him across the snow… . The tank nearest to us is on a track to run us down… . When the German tank is but 15 yards away, I grab my buddy by the wrist and feign a lurch to my right. The tank follows the move. Then I lurch back to my left. The German tank clamors by, only inches away… . In their wake the meadow is strewn with casualties. I turn to tend my fallen comrade. He is dead. (quoted in Danzer el al. 2003:775)

The page continues talking about McGrath and shows how he is later haunted by this image.

Visual depictions of World War II also changed over time. Earlier photos and pictures almost exclusively show aspects of the war not involving death: for example, MacArthur, battleships, soldiers fighting in the cold of Ardennes, maps, and the ubiquitous image of the Iwo Jima flag-raising. Images relating to casualties were,

for the most part, photos of uniform crosses at military cemeteries. Pictures in more recent textbooks, however, show images of specific soldiers, with captions sometimes mentioning their deaths or wounding, images of dead and bloating soldiers on the beaches of Saipan and New Guinea, and many images of gold stars and other symbols of sacrifice.

Textbooks' coverage of Vietnam underwent a similar transformation. Chapin, McHugh, and Gross's (1971:607) textbook is typical of that era in its only mention of Vietnam War casualties:

> As American military activity increased, there was a continual *escalation*, or increase in intensity, of the war. Attacks and counterattacks increased. By June, 1970, more than 42,500 Americans had been killed and about 300,000 wounded. The Vietnamese civilian casualties were far higher, as a result of intensive bombing, shelling, and use of napalm.

Chapin and colleagues never show us the war from the perspective of any of its soldiers, nor do they explain what napalm is or what it did to those bombed with it.

A 1999 textbook devotes three pages to the perspectives of soldiers who were injured or suffered emotional trauma:

> Few who served in Vietnam survived unscathed, whether psychologically or physically. One of the 303,600 Americans wounded during the long war was 101st Airborne platoon leader James Bombard, first shot and then blown up by a mortar round during the bitter Tet fighting at Hue in February 1968. He describes his traumatic experience: "Feeling the bullet rip into your flesh, the shrapnel tear the flesh from your bones and the blood run down your leg… . To put your hand on your chest and to come away with your hand red with your own blood, and to feel it running out of your eyes and out of your mouth, and seeing it spurt out of your guts, realizing you were dying… . I was ripped open from the top of my head to the tip of my toes. I had forty-five holes in me." (Divine et al. 1999:955)

Recent textbooks … also acknowledge opposition to the Vietnam War. In a chapter review, Nash's (2004:804) book offers a "critical thinking" exercise: "Identifying Alternatives: Imagine that you are a student during the Vietnam era and you are going to be drafted into the military. List several choices you could make in response to the draft. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of each possible decision." The teacher's edition lists the following choices: "Seek deferment (allow time for war to end; be seen as unpatriotic); go to Canada (start new life; be away from family and friends); accept draft (do what Government asks; be killed or injured); apply to be conscientious objector; resist draft (go to jail)." All these possibilities are discussed in the student edition of the textbook. Resistance and conscientious objection are often mentioned in the context of countercultural movements, and there is ample mention of soldiers who were killed or maimed in Vietnam.

Early in the time period, visual depictions of the Vietnam War, much like those of World War II, focus

heavily on maps and generals. However, the images of Vietnam underwent a striking transformation. All the recent textbooks include multiple photos of wounded and crying soldiers; caskets covered in U.S. flags; mourning soldiers and family members; the Vietnam Veterans Memorial with mourning family members, comrades, and heartfelt mementos; and disabled veterans. Even the famous poster of Uncle Sam, wounded, with his outstretched arm not beckoning for recruits but for help and bearing the words "I Want Out" instead of "I Want You" was included in a few later textbooks.

Evaluating the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1, derived from theories that posit a "hidden curriculum" designed to promote patriotism, military service, and national sacrifice, is not well supported by the evidence. Neither the steady use of "death" words for World War II and the increasing focus on death in Vietnam … nor the rising number of items that mention casualties … necessarily challenges Hypothesis 1 since a focus on deaths can be a celebration of patriotic sacrifice that the hidden curriculum would seek to foster. However, the shift in the relative proportion of textbook attention to the hellish, rather than glorious, aspects of both wars, and increasing efforts to portray both wars in terms of the personal experiences of U.S. participants rather than in impersonal and nationalistic terms … do challenge Hypothesis 1. Textbooks that present successful and unsuccessful U.S. wars as predominately occasions of personal suffering and horror are less likely to foster patriotic feelings or a desire for military service than did earlier textbooks that described glorious battles leading to victory and slighted the human costs of war. One aspect of hidden curriculum theory supported by the evidence is the continuing lack of attention to non-U.S. casualties. Recent textbooks are patriotic and nationalistic in that they continue to focus, almost exclusively, on the experiences, concerns, and sacrifices of Americans.

The increased attention to protests against the Vietnam War … supports Hypothesis 2, which is derived from Fleming and Nurse's (1982, 1988) studies of 1980s textbooks. Since they conducted their research, the trend toward increasing coverage of the antiwar movement has continued. However, most recent textbooks still ignore the substance of activists' criticisms of U.S. policies in Vietnam. What FitzGerald wrote in 1979 still holds true: "Texts are neither hawkish nor dovish on the war—they are simply evasive. Since it is really quite hard to discuss the war and evade all the major issues, their Vietnam sections make remarkable reading" (p. 126).

Hypothesis 3 is best supported by the data from our textbook analyses. There has been substantial change in how textbooks present both wars, and this change is manifested primarily in an increased focus on the suffering and sacrifice of individual U.S. soldiers. While we are able to track and specify the direction and magnitude of this change, our data are less helpful in allowing us to conclusively adjudicate among the different theories that identify various causes of this change, even as they yield similar predictions of greater focus on individual experiences and sacrifices in the two wars.

The shift since the 1970s to more negative portrayals of war, combined with textbooks' continuing inclusion of items that glorify combat, supports Moreau, Ward, and Nash and colleagues' assertions that the 1945 to 1970 era was unusual for the consensus in textbooks. The shifts since then suggest a return to a tradition of authors, educators, and mobilized publics using textbooks and classrooms as terrain for ideological conflict. This, in turn, means textbooks have become ever more useful tools for teachers who want to follow Apple's and Kincheloe's advice to engage in critical pedagogy. Most textbooks now have elements that can support teachers who are critical of militarism and who want to show the dark side of war. However, textbooks still have few explicit criticisms of U.S. foreign policy, and Americans are shown almost exclusively as victims rather than perpetrators of the horrors of war.

Textbooks' increasing focus on individual soldiers' experiences, rather than on the nation's geopolitical goals, supports world culture theory's hypothesis that textbooks reflect the worldwide legitimation of "the identities and needs and choices of individual persons, not of corporate societies" (Frank and Meyer 2002:88). Yet textbooks' greater emphasis on the hellish and personal aspects of the Vietnam War, compared to their depictions of World War II, suggests the changes have been, at least in part, a response to the particular experiences of the United States in Vietnam, as well as a general U.S. or worldwide cultural shift. The focus on American, as opposed to other countries', casualties challenges the notion that "in this world society, education comes prominently to include human rights education" (Bromley et al. 2011:550). The textbooks we examined evince little concern for the rights or even the humanity of soldiers or civilians of the countries with which the United States was at war. Based on the evidence of the textbooks we examined, legitimation of the identities and rights of individuals stops at the water's edge.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

U.S. textbooks' treatment of war has been significantly transformed since the end of the Vietnam War. The militarism of the hidden curriculum has become subordinated to a concern for the experiences and suffering of individual U.S. soldiers. Americans' unhappiness with the course and outcome of the Vietnam War is reflected in the significantly more hellish and personalized textbook accounts of that war, as opposed to the more nuanced presentation of World War II, and also in increasing coverage of the antiwar movement. Yet textbooks have moved away from glorifying World War II as well, albeit to a lesser extent than for Vietnam. Textbooks' changing presentation of both wars suggests that (1) the Vietnam War soured Americans on all wars, not just Vietnam; (2) the antiwar and other social movements, including the radical pedagogy championed by Apple and others, have made uncritical patriotism less acceptable in textbooks; and (3) a world culture of individualism affects how textbook authors and publishers think about war and the experiences and sacrifices of soldiers (at least in the culture of rich, Western countries that have abolished conscription).

Our analysis of the textbooks themselves cannot tell us how much the changes in their treatments of war were due to any of these various causal factors. That would require in-depth research on the production of textbooks, creating an equivalent study for the United States of what Dierkes (2010) achieved for Germany and Japan; such a study would deepen the now outdated analysis in FitzGerald's (1979) book. Nash and colleagues (1997) argue that the return of historians to textbook writing has broadened the range of views in social studies texts; however, that claim is not backed by actual research on the process of producing texts. Research in this vein should probe for the extent to which historians and other textbook producers are influenced by critical pedagogy or a world culture of human rights. Our findings of substantial changes in U.S. textbook depictions of war should inform further research on the production of textbooks and use of textbooks in classrooms. Rather than further statistical analyses of our data, a closer look at the textbook writing process might provide a better understanding of the variability among textbooks and differences from year to year … particularly the spikes in the mid-1990s and 2000s… .

We need to remember that textbooks' emphasis on U.S. soldiers' pain and death does not extend to the soldiers or civilians of America's enemies or allies. Textbooks continue to ignore or slight the atomic and conventional bombs targeted on Japanese and German civilians and to give short shrift to My Lai and other atrocities committed by the United States in Vietnam. Students who read U.S. textbooks can come away thinking that only Americans suffer in war. The limited perspective on suffering in war presented by U.S. textbooks suggests that the changes we trace have less to do with a generalized opposition to war and more to do with concern for the individual rights and well-being of one's fellow citizens. Dierkes (2010), whose work we noted earlier, found that the West and East German and Japanese governments differed greatly in their efforts to ensure that textbooks discussed atrocities committed by their nations' troops in World War II, along with the suffering of their own soldiers and civilians. The paths from defeat in war to new textbook depictions of conflicts are variable across and within nations and can change long after the end of a war; textbook production is affected by and mediated through other cultural and institutional forces. Textbooks reflect and may contribute to a growing intolerance, at least in the United States and other wealthy nations, toward

casualties among a nation's own soldiers (Shaw 2005). This research is a first step in explicating the relationship between geopolitics, cultural attitudes toward war, and how schools teach about war.

Note

1. The bibliographic entries for this and the other textbooks quoted in this section are available in online Appendix A [of the original article].

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READING 26

Facts or Critical Thinking Skills?

What NAEP Results Say

Harold Wenglinsky

This reading by Harold Wenglinsky examines the role of teaching practices on what knowledge is presented. The debate between teaching basic skills and teaching critical thinking is not new, but it has become more heated with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top legislations' emphasis on accountability. Although the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) that measures factual learning has been around since 1969, the federal government's focus on accountability uses other methods of evaluation that emphasize basic skills rather than critical thinking.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What national and local factors influence how knowledge is presented in schools?
2. What difference does it make if students learn basic skills rather than critical thinking?
3. Will the current focus on changing testing to assess basic skills influence the type of knowledge presented in schools or only the presentation of the knowledge?

In the past 30 years, policymakers and educators have debated whether schooling should emphasize facts or critical thinking skills. Proponents of the first view argue that students need to know when the Civil War happened before they can accurately interpret its causes. Proponents of the second view counter that students will soon forget the exact dates of the Battle of Chancellorsville, but they will probably remember the insights that they gain from studying the battle's causes, leadership, military reasoning, and human costs.

From "Facts or Critical Skills? What NAEP Results Say," by H. Wenglinsky, *Educational Leadership*, 61(1), pp. 32–35. Copyright 2004 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Reprinted with permission.

State policymakers have responded to the shifting debate. Thus, the California legislature has gone back and forth between emphasizing phonics and whole language approaches in its reading curriculum. Maryland emphasizes critical thinking skills in its state standards and tests; just across the Potomac River, Virginia emphasizes basic facts.

For the most part, however, this debate has not been informed by actual empirical data. Fortunately, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) offers relevant information. Administered every year or two since 1969 in various subjects—including mathematics, science, reading, and civics—the NAEP assessments are taken by representative samples of 4th, 8th, and 12th graders throughout the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Because each student takes only a small subset of the examination, the

full examination can cover a substantial breadth and depth of material. Test items include both multiple-choice responses and more complex written responses so that they assess both basic skills and critical thinking skills. In addition to the test, students and their teachers and school administrators also fill out questionnaires that furnish information about student and teacher backgrounds and the instructional practices used in the classroom. By measuring the relationships between specific instructional practices and student performance, we can use NAEP data to compare the effectiveness of teaching for meaning with that of teaching basic skills. Using advanced statistical techniques, we can even take into account the potential influence of student achievement, thus isolating the effects of instruction oriented to teaching for meaning.

When we examine various analyses, some published and some unpublished (Wenglinsky, 2000, 2002, 2003), a clear pattern emerges from the data: Across subjects, teaching for meaning is associated with higher NAEP test scores. Although students must learn basic skills and facts at some point, these results suggest that instruction emphasizing advanced reasoning skills promotes high student performance.

Math and Science: Early Teaching for Meaning

In mathematics, some educators advocate teaching students basic skills, such as the times tables, and reinforcing those skills through drill and practice. Others advocate teaching students mathematical reasoning, such as the principles behind algorithms for multiplication and division, and emphasizing such complex topics as data analysis and probability early in the curriculum. The NAEP data supports the latter approach. Among U.S. 4th and 8th graders, teaching that emphasizes higher-order thinking skills, project-based learning, opportunities to solve problems that have multiple solutions, [and] such hands-on techniques as using manipulatives were all associated with higher performance on the mathematics NAEP. Such methods reflect the idea that learning mathematics is an iterative process, rather than a linear process in which students progress from simple facts to more complicated ones (McLauglin & Talbert, 1993).

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) provides further evidence. Stigler and Hiebert (1999), analyzing videotapes of classes in the United States, Germany, and Japan, found that the Japanese 8th grade teachers were more likely to emphasize critical thinking by having students fashion their own solutions to problems and by introducing advanced material (for example, algebra) at a relatively early stage. And overall, Japanese students outperformed their U.S. and German counterparts in mathematics.

In science, the curricular debate has been between those who advocate teaching students the facts of science and those who emphasize hands-on activities that allow students to explore theory. Basic skills advocates do not necessarily object to the use of hands-on activities, but they assign them a different role, in which the teacher defines laboratory procedures and students carry them out to demonstrate, for example, what happens when heat is placed under a balloon.

The NAEP data again suggest the benefits of teaching for meaning. Students tended to score higher on the 4th grade and 8th grade NAEP science tests when they had experienced science instruction centered on projects in which they took a high degree of initiative. Traditional activities, such as completing worksheets and reading primarily from textbooks, seemed to have no positive effect.

Reading and Civics: A More Linear Picture

In contrast to the NAEP results for math and science, the results in the humanities demonstrate the benefits of a more linear approach to teaching.

In reading, one debate has centered on how students should learn to identify words and develop fluency, and a second debate has centered on how students should develop reading comprehension. The first debate has played itself out in the reading wars between phonics and whole language advocates. The phonics approach emphasizes teaching students to sound out words, whereas whole language emphasizes identifying unfamiliar words from their context. Because the NAEP does not test students until grade 4, its results shed little light on this first debate. Reports by the National Reading Panel (2000) and the National Research Council (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) have supposedly resolved the issue in favor of a balanced approach that focuses on phonics but leaves some room for contextual approaches (although some reading researchers question the reports' findings).

The second debate—regarding reading comprehension—has not been fully engaged. Some scholars have simply staked out positions on reading comprehension analogous to their position on word identification and fluency. Yet here, NAEP scores do offer some guidance—and they strongly suggest that when it comes to comprehension, basic skills approaches are inappropriate.

In both 4th and 8th grades, NAEP scores in comprehension favor teaching for meaning. Students tended to perform better on NAEP comprehension questions when they had experienced instruction in metacognitive skills (drawing meaning from text by asking questions, summarizing the work, identifying key themes, and thinking critically about the author's purpose and whether that purpose was achieved). In addition, students' comprehension was higher when they had been exposed to "real" texts—books and stories rather than short passages in basal readers. Finally, students improved their comprehension skills by reading literature and then writing about that literature, which gave them the opportunity to apply their metacognitive skills.

Thus, it appears that learning to read follows a linear trajectory. Previous studies suggest that students first need to learn the basic skills from phonics to sound out words and develop fluency. Once they have done that, however, the NAEP scores indicate that students should move on to develop reasoning skills and critical thinking skills in order to comprehend texts.

In civics, the story is also linear. The debate in civics centers on whether students should learn facts about the government through textbooks and homework or through more hands-on civics activities, such as community service. The NAEP data indicate that the 4th graders, on the other hand, benefit both from reading textbooks and such hands-on activities as service learning. Thus, in the case of civics, students will likely do best with a developmental model in which they begin by learning the content and then go on to make sense of it through civic practice.

Basic Skills and Teaching for Meaning in Partnership

These analyses of NAEP results suggest that although basic skills have their place in pedagogy, critical thinking skills are essential. In mathematics and science at both the 4th and 8th grade levels, practices that emphasize critical thinking skills are associated with higher student achievement, whereas practices that emphasize basic skills are not. Apparently, students more effectively learn simple content, such as the times tables, if they understand the conceptual framework that lies behind that content. Educators do not need to choose between basic and advanced skills in math and science, but we should introduce advanced skills early to motivate students to learn the basic algorithms—which, let's face it, are not very interesting in and of themselves.

In the humanities, on the other hand, the data suggest the value of a more linear process. Students should not begin their school lives as readers developing their own rules for spelling or creating their own vernacular language. But once they know how to take language from the page, students need opportunities to construct sense out of text by interpreting it, writing about it, and reflecting on what they have written. Similarly, civics students need to know what the branches of government do, what freedoms the Bill of Rights protects, and how to influence their elected officials. Once students have learned these facts, however, they need to put their knowledge into practice by performing community service activities, going on field trips, and communicating with elected officials on matters important to them… .

Implications for Policymakers and Educators

These empirical findings about the importance of teaching for meaning suggest certain actions that public officials and education administrators need to take.

At the school level, principals need to encourage their teachers to spend more time teaching for meaning across subject areas—especially in math and science in the early grades. In the humanities, students may need to learn basic skills in reading and civics in elementary school. But by the time students reach middle school, teaching for meaning becomes crucial.

Unfortunately, school principals and superintendents may have difficulty moving in this direction because federal policy now intervenes in state and local curriculum choices in favor of basic skills and against teaching for meaning. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) constitutes an unprecedented level of federal involvement in education.

NCLB's goals are highly laudable. Despite the complaints of many educators, creating a national infrastructure that holds schools accountable for the performance of their students and sanctions schools for a pattern of repeated failure is an appropriate role for the federal government. When the states demonstrated their inability during the Great Depression to provide social insurance and welfare benefits to their unemployed and elderly, and when states were unwilling during the civil rights era to educate black and white students together, federal intervention became necessary. These days, where the states have demonstrated their inability to educate our children well—particularly minority children and those living in poverty—the federal government is again obligated to act. Only the federal government can create a common yardstick for measuring performance and take actions against states that do not make the fiscal effort to provide good schools for all students. My own state of New York provides a case in point: Education in New York City and other urban systems is woefully underfunded, and as a result, school and teacher quality is manifestly lacking. In the sense of holding states accountable, then, NCLB could do some good.

But NCLB has overextended itself. It has moved beyond accountability for student achievement results by providing professional development funds that exclusively support a basic skills approach. To qualify for the funds, such cities as New York—which desperately need money—must teach a basic skills curriculum across the board. In addition, the federal government is rewriting the NAEP so that the tests will reflect a greater emphasis on basic skills instead of their current balance between basic and higher-order skills. By squeezing out critical thinking skills, these actions put the cognitive development of our students at risk.

Many education leaders oppose NCLB on the wrong grounds. They should embrace the notion of being held accountable for the achievement of their students but demand autonomy in how to improve that achievement. And as the NAEP data suggest, the best way for school leaders to raise student achievement is by placing more emphasis on teaching for meaning.

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Projects for Further Exploration

1. Try to find one or two history textbooks. Do you agree with Tyack that they are bland? Can you see some of the social/cultural influences that he argues have shaped the knowledge presented in these textbooks?
2. Using the web, see if you can find out more about the publication of textbooks. That is, check out a major publisher to see how many textbooks are sold (e.g., a fourth-grade reading series) and how that publisher markets the textbooks.
3. Examine textbooks from public schools in your area and ask whether the information presented is geared toward exploring ideas or reciting the cultural character of this country. Do these textbooks provide an opportunity for exploration and understanding or focus on reciting basic facts as described by Wenglinsky in the reading in this chapter?

Chapter 7 Who Gets Ahead?: Race, Class, and Gender in Education

Sorting people into categories and ranking those categories are processes that pervade all institutions, including education systems. Social stratification has been a central concern for sociologists of education. In this chapter, we explore the role that education plays in stratifying individuals and groups in society and within schools. Although issues of stratification are discussed throughout this book, this chapter focuses on the ways schools stratify by race, class, and gender while readings in Chapter 8 describe attempts to alleviate inequality in schools. Unfortunately, space does not permit us to explore all inequalities, such as the prejudice and discrimination in schools for students with alternative sexual identities (Pascoe, 2007; see reading by Castro & Sujak in Chapter 4) and those whose body types and learning styles do not fit the "norm" (physical and cognitive differences; see reference to this in reading by Rotberg in Chapter 8). As you study the readings in this chapter and in Chapter 8, we encourage you to examine parallels between the ways different groups are treated in schools and to consider how and why inequality exists in education. In doing so, you will develop a deeper understanding of the role schools play in maintaining inequality at the micro and macro levels.

Let's stop to take a look at America's schools by examining class, race, and gender compositions. First, while it would seem that the proportion of males and females in schools should be similar to the population as a whole —49.2% male to 50.8% female (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015a)—this is not the case. The relatively even sex ratio changes as students move through the school system, with boys more likely than girls (7.1% vs. 5.9%) to drop out of high school in 2014 (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2015a). Women are more likely to graduate college at all degree levels (NCES, 2016b)—bachelor's degrees (57.1% awarded to women), master's degrees (59.9%), and doctoral degrees (51.8%). This gender distribution across schooling, including higher education degrees, has lead some people to be concerned about boys not achieving as much as girls in schools, as Roslyn Arlin Mickelson discusses in her reading in this chapter.

There are concerns as well about educational outcomes related to racial/ethnic and social class differences. The U.S. Census Bureau (2015b) reports that in 2015, 33.6% of all children under the age of 18 lived in poverty and the percentage of children living in poverty varied by race—17.2% of children identified as White alone, 32.9% of children identified as Black alone, and 28.9% of children identified as Hispanic (note this ethnic category overlaps with race categories). The percentage graduating from high school also varies by race and ethnicity. The U.S. Department of Education (NCES, 2015c) reports that in 2013–2014, the percentage of individuals graduating from high school was 87% for Whites, 73% for Blacks, and 76% for Hispanics. The rates of college completion for the college cohort starting in 2008 are also distressing. Those completing bachelor's degrees was much higher for Whites (43.7%) and Asians (47.7%) than for Blacks (21.4%) and Hispanics (30.4%) (NCES, 2015d). Clearly, these figures suggest considerable inequality in American education.

Sociologists focus on inequality in education. This inequality comes in a variety of forms, as you will soon see. However, the end result is always to give advantage to one group over another or put some children at a

distinct disadvantage in what might otherwise be an equal playing field. Caroline Hodges Persell discusses various explanations for racial inequality in school. The readings by Greg J. Duncan and Richard J. Murnane and John R. Logan, Elisabeta Minca, and Sinem Adar in this chapter focus on social class as a barrier to equal educational opportunities. The reading by Roslyn Arlin Mickelson adds to this discussion by examining gender in educational experiences. Edward W. Morris's reading also illustrates the interaction of race, class, and gender in his study of students' experiences in a rural school. And the reading by Annette Lareau, Shani Adia Evans, and April Yee illustrates how the "rules" of education may disadvantage even middle-class individuals, who can easily take advantage of cultural and economic capital by purchasing houses in the "right" place as a means to strategically select the best schools for their children (Billingham & Hunt, 2016; Frankenberg, 2013). Clearly, improving academic achievement for *all* individuals is very complex.

Stratification in schools has been studied either at the school level or by examining the effects on individuals. At the school level, researchers study stratification within schools or between schools. In this chapter, both Logan, Minca, and Adar and Duncan and Murnane explain between-school differences in educational achievement. Stratification between schools refers to the different educational experiences offered in different schools.

Within-school stratification focuses on the placement of students within certain courses or curriculum tracks, as well as structures that exclude or discourage some groups of students from programs or curricula. One of the primary methods of within-school stratification affecting students across race and social class is the process of curriculum tracking. Curriculum tracking is a structural feature of schools in which students take classes at different levels of difficulty. Different classes on the same topic are offered at differing levels of difficulty for some classes, and these classes taken often determine the next course a student will enter in the sequence of courses in that topic.

There are a large number of quantitative studies that define or examine the effects of tracking on students. Vanfossen, Jones, and Spade (1987) categorize the early research on the effects of tracking on status maintenance into three categories. One category of research looked at the effects of tracking in maintaining social class status from generation to generation. The second category assumed that tracking was based on ability; therefore, differential treatment in tracks is unrelated to social mobility. The third category of research concluded that the relationship between tracking and status maintenance is "irrelevant, because tracking in high school does not have a significant impact upon achievement, values, and educational outcomes" (Vanfossen et al., 1987, p. 105). The first explanation is most likely. When children enter middle school, they are placed in ability groups based on achievement test scores; however, such placement is not based on academic factors alone (Dauber, Alexander, & Entwisle, 1996). This trajectory of ability grouping is reinforced as children enter high school. The correlation between social class and track placement is too strong to be explained away by chance. Although some lower-class students end up in more challenging tracks, many others do not. Assignment to a lower track typically exposes a student to less rigorous instructional methods along with less challenging curricula (Gamoran, Nystrand, Berends, & LePore, 1995). Tracking students into lower-level curriculum is also related to attachment to school, level of self-esteem, and more limited expectations for future opportunities (Vanfossen et al., 1987). Some of the more recent research

on tracking focuses on defining tracking itself. Indeed, the procedure is more complicated than simply assigning students to academic or vocational programs of study, as envisioned at the beginning of the 20th century. The idea of differential courses of study was introduced at that time as one of many efforts to tailor schools to the needs of a society dealing with nascent industrialization and an influx of immigrants (Oakes, 1985; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). By 1970, the organization of tracking became less rigid as schools allowed students to select their own courses. Today, curriculum is defined structurally and vertically, where one course is dependent on taking previous courses (Ferrare, 2013). Samuel Lucas (1999) describes these patterns of course taking across subjects that exist today, which continue to be organized in a hierarchical level of knowledge presentation tailored to different ability levels. However, Ferrare (2013) also notes that classes can be structured horizontally, with little or no prequalifications, and classes can be taken at any time during one's high school career (Ferrare, 2013), such as journalism, robotics, or child development. In 1985, Powell, Farrar, and Cohen called this array of choices the "shopping mall high school." Despite the looser structure of horizontal courses, Ferrare (2013) found that students tend to congregate in the same classes with similar students.

Much of recent literature on within-school stratification or tracking attempts to understand the effects of tracking on students' academic achievements and orientations toward school. Grouping students by ability or tracking begins in elementary school, disadvantaging children from lower-income families long before they enter the middle school. Children from lower-income families not only do not "catch up" to their wealthier peers in elementary school, but they fall further behind throughout the school years. Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2007) followed students over a period of time and found that lower-income children experience a "summer setback" in achievement, whereas their peers from higher-income families actually show gains on achievement tests over the summer when they are away from school because they are exposed to more academic-enhancing experiences during their time off. Bennett, Lutz, and Jayaram (2012) add to our understanding of how social class influences children's educational outcomes by examining the influence of social class on how time is spent outside of school. They provide data from interviews with parents detailing the parents' orientations toward after-school activities for their children and explore cultural and structural explanations for why some children are not afforded the same opportunities as others in their after-school activities. Thus, the influence of social class is not only strong in predicting academic achievement, but it is also complex.

The reading by Morris in this chapter focuses on the micro-level or interactional factors that shape children's schooling and life experiences. Peer pressure can play a role in where one "fits" in school. Persell also describes the interpersonal interactions that create inequalities within schools, reviewing various explanations for racial differences in achievement outcomes. As the readings by Morris and Persell illustrate, families can have a significant impact on the direction of their children's schooling; however, teachers' expectations based on the gender, racial, and social class backgrounds of children can also influence learning.

The reading by Mickelson further examines gender differences within schools, as well as the unequal payoffs of education for females and males across race and social class (Legewie & DiPrete, 2012). These processes are subtle, yet they have a substantial impact on the ultimate success of women and minority students

(Archer-Banks & Behar-Horenstein, 2012; Calaraco, 2011; James, 2012; Owens, 2016). These readings illustrate how the stratification process occurs in different school contexts and is reinforced by teachers, peers, and others in the process of educating our children and becomes incorporated into children's expectations for themselves (Grossman & Porche, 2014).

The following readings are meant to provide you with a better understanding of the mechanisms that segregate students both between and within schools in terms of curriculum and learning experiences. This differential treatment results in unequal educational and occupational opportunities for students across social class, race and ethnicity, and gender.

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READING 27

Growing Income Inequality Threatens American Education

Greg J. Duncan and Richard J. Murnane

In this summary from their book, Restoring Opportunity: The Crisis of Inequality and the Challenge for American Education, *Greg J. Duncan and Richard J. Murnane provide evidence for increased income inequality in the United States. They document major shifts in income distributions across the U.S. population that create an even larger income gap between the top 20% and bottom 20% of U.S. children's families. In this reading, they link how the income gap is related to increasing inequality in U.S. schools. Their overview provides a context for the readings that follow and helps to understand how inequality in the United States affects American education*.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What changes have occurred from 1970 to 2010 in the way income is distributed in children's families?
2. List some of the ways these changes in children's family income make a difference in inequality in U.S. schools.
3. Why do they argue in their title that this inequality in income "threatens American education"?

America has always taken pride in being the land of opportunity, a country in which hard work and sacrifice result in a better life for one's children. Economic growth has made that dream a reality for generations of Americans, including many people who started out poor. The quarter century following World War II was a golden era for the U.S. economy, as high- and low-income families shared the benefits of substantial economic growth. But storm clouds began to gather in the 1970s. In particular, computer-driven technological changes favoring highly educated workers, plus demographic shifts such as the rise of single-parent families, have produced sharply growing income gaps among families.

From "Growing Income Inequality Threatens American Education," by G. J. Duncan and R. J. Murnane, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(6), pp. 8–14. Copyright 2014 by Phi Delta Kappa International. Reprinted with permission.

In the past, America's public schools have responded well to the challenges of a changing world. Indeed, America's world leadership in education has fueled much of its prosperity and made the 20th century the "American Century" (Goldin & Katz, 2008). But technological changes, globalization, and rising income inequality have placed great strains on the decentralized American approach to public education. We are constantly reminded that the math, science, and language skills of our children and young adults lag far behind those of children in other countries. In international rankings, our college graduation rate has fallen from first to 12th.

In this article … we describe the origins and nature of growing income inequality and some of its consequences for American children. We document the increased family income inequality that's occurred

over the past 40 years. An increase in income disparity has been more than matched by an expanding gap between the money that low- and high-income parents spend on enrichment activities for their children.

Most distressingly, increasing gaps in academic achievement and educational attainments have accompanied the growth in income inequality. Differences in the reading and math achievement levels of low- and high-income children are much larger than several decades ago, as are differences in college graduation rates.

What accounts for these widening gaps? Drawing from the first part of our recent book, *Restoring Opportunity: The Crisis of Inequality and the Challenge for American Education* (Harvard Education Press and the Russell Sage Foundation, 2014), we explain that the evidence supports pathways operating through both families and schools. In addition to growing differences in the resources spent by poor and rich families on their children, declining real incomes for low-income families have affected maternal stress, mental health, and parenting.

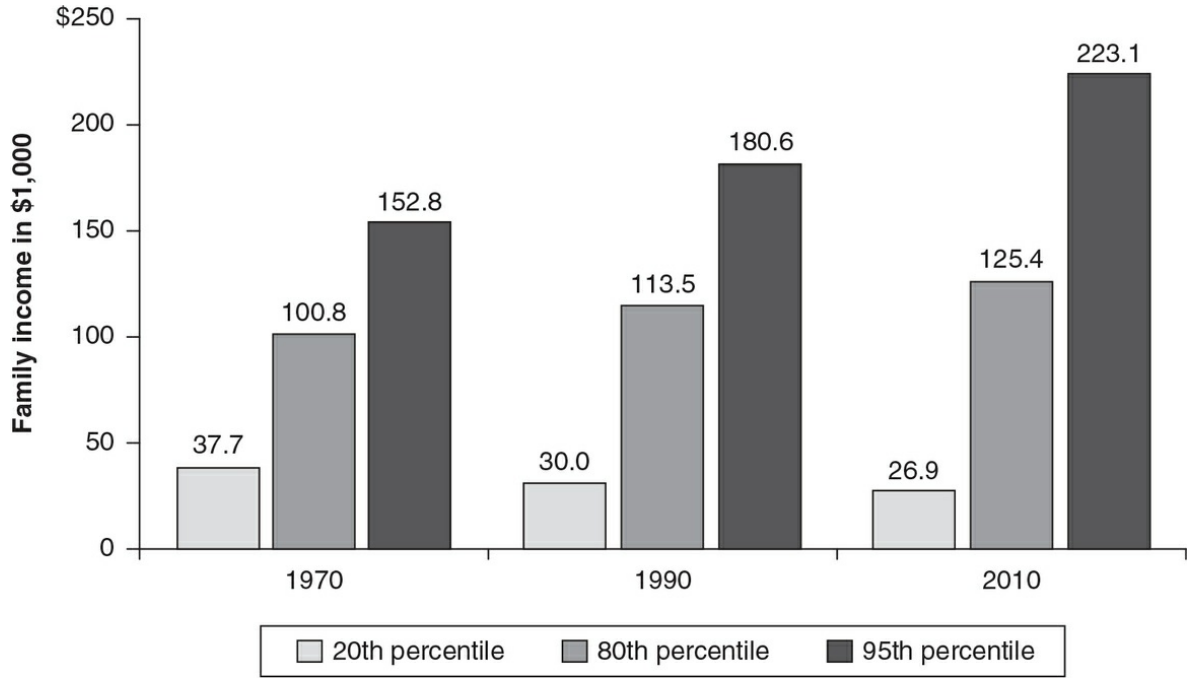
Rising residential segregation by income has led to increasing concentrations of low- and high-income children attending separate schools. Peer problems, geographic mobility, and challenges in attracting and retaining good teachers have made it difficult to provide consistently high-quality learning experiences in schools serving a large proportion of low-income students… .

Widening Gaps

Based on U.S. Census Bureau data, the left-hand bar in each set of bars in Figure 27.1 shows the average income in a particular year (in 2012 dollars) for children at the 20th percentile of the nation's family income distribution. This means that, in a given year, 20% of children lived in families with incomes below that level, while 80% had incomes above it. In 1970, the dividing line was drawn at $37,664.

The middle bar in each set shows the average family income in a given year at the 80th percentile of the distribution, which was about $100,000 (in 2012 dollars) in 1970. The right-hand bar in each set shows the average income for very high-income families—those with incomes exceeding those of 95% of U.S. families (a little more than about $150,000 in 1970).

Figure 27.1 Children's Family Income Over Time



Note: Chart shows 20th, 80th, and 95th percentiles of the distribution of family incomes for all children ages 5–17. They are based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau and are adjusted for inflation. Amounts are in 2012 dollars. Reprinted with permission from Whither Opportunity? © 2011 Russell Sage Foundation.

In contrast to the two decades before 1970, when the incomes of these three groups grew at virtually identical rates, economic growth over the next four decades failed to lift all boats. In 2010, family income at the 20th percentile was more than 25% lower than the inflation-adjusted corresponding family income in 1970. In contrast, the real incomes of families at the 80th percentile grew by 23% to $125,000 over these four decades, while the incomes of the richest 5% of families rose even more. Census Bureau data also show that the decline of the incomes of families at the lower end of the spectrum is reflected in the nation's child poverty rate: Over

16 million U.S. children—more than 20%—were living in poor families in 2012, up sharply from the 15% child poverty rate in 1970.

During this same time period, the gap between the average reading and mathematics skills of students from low- and high-income families increased substantially… . Among children who were adolescents in the late 1960s, test scores of low-income children lagged behind those of their better-off peers by four-fifths of a standard deviation—which represents about 80 points on the scale used to measure SAT scores. Forty years later, this gap was 50% larger, amounting to nearly 125 SAT-type points (Reardon, 2011). We were surprised to discover how much the income-based gap grew during this period in view of the decline in the racial gap in test scores in the decades following the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education*.

Given the importance of academic preparation in determining educational success, it should come as no surprise that growth in the income gap in children's reading and mathematics achievement has contributed to growth in the corresponding gap in the rate of college completion … (Bailey & Dynarski, 2011). Among children growing up in relatively affluent families, the four-year college graduation rate of those who were teenagers in the mid-1990s was 18 percentage points higher than the rate for those who were teenagers in the late 1970s. In contrast, among children from low-income families, the graduation rate was only 4 percentage points higher for the later cohort than for the earlier one. Analysts differ in their assessments of the relative importance of college costs and academic preparation in explaining the increasing gulf between the college graduation rates of affluent and low-income children in our country. However, both cost burdens and academic performance are rooted, at least in part, in the growth in family income inequality.

Inequality Affects Skills Attainment

American society relies on its families to nurture its children and its schools to level the playing field for children born into different circumstances. More than any other institution, schools are charged with making equality of opportunity a reality. During a period of rising inequality, can schools play this critical role effectively? Or has growing income inequality affected families, neighborhoods, and schools in a manner that undercuts the effectiveness of schools serving disadvantaged populations?

Families

Very young children tend to be completely dependent on their families to provide what they need for healthy development (Duncan & Magnuson, 2011). Children growing up in families with greater financial resources score higher on many dimensions of school readiness upon entering kindergarten. An obvious advantage of a higher family income is that it provides more resources to buy books, computers, high-quality childcare, summer camps, private schooling, and other enrichments. In the early 1970s, high-income families spent just under $3,000 more per year (in 2012 dollars) on child enrichment than low-income families … (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). By 2006, this gap had nearly tripled, to $8,000. Spending differences are largest for enrichment activities such as music lessons, travel, and summer camps (Kaushal et al., 2011). Differential access to such activities may explain the gaps in background knowledge between children from high-income families and those from low-income families that are so predictive of reading skills in the middle and high school years (Snow, 2002).

Parents also spend different amounts and quality of time interacting with their children. High-income parents spend more time than low-income parents in literacy activities with their children. Most disparate is time spent in "novel" places—other than at home, school, or in the care of another parent or a childcare provider. Between birth and age six, children from high-income families spend an average of 1,300 more hours in novel contexts than children from low-income families (Phillips, 2011). These experiences, financed by the higher incomes of more affluent families, also contribute to the background knowledge that is so critical for comprehending science and social studies texts in middle school.

It is difficult to untangle the precise effects of a multitude of family-related factors—income and expenditures, family structure, time, and language use—on the disparities in children's school readiness and success that have emerged over the past several decades. But the evidence linking income to children's school achievement suggests that the sharp increase in the income gap between high- and low-income families since the 1970s and the concomitant increase in the income-based gap in children's school success are hardly coincidental.

In particular, two experimental studies in the 1970s examined the overall effects on children of income supplements that boosted family income by as much as 50% (Maynard, 1977; Maynard & Murnane, 1979). At two of the three sites, researchers found that children in families randomly assigned to receive an income supplement did significantly better with respect to early academic achievement and school attendance than children in families that received no income supplement.

Still more evidence on policy-relevant effects of income increases comes from a study that takes advantage of the increasing generosity of the U.S. Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) between 1993 and 1997 to compare children's test scores before and after the credit was expanded (Dahl & Lochner, 2012). The authors found increases in low-income children's achievement in middle childhood that coincided with the EITC expansion.

The strongest research evidence appears to indicate that money matters in a variety of ways for children's long-term success in school. While some children always have enjoyed greater benefits and advantages than

others, the income gap has widened dramatically over the past four decades and, as these research studies suggest, this has been a significant factor in widening the gap in children's school success as well.

Schools

Researchers have long known that children attending schools with mostly low-income classmates have lower academic achievement and graduation rates than those attending schools with more affluent student populations. Less well understood are the ways in which student body composition shapes school functioning and children's developmental trajectories and long-run outcomes.

In recent decades, it has been largely through an increase in income-based segregation of neighborhoods and schools that growing inequality of family income has affected the educational attainments of the nation's children. Residential segregation by income has increased substantially in recent decades, as high-income families buy homes in neighborhoods where less-affluent families cannot afford to live, and poor families are increasingly surrounded by neighbors who are poor as well (Reardon & Bischoff, 2011). This reduces interactions between rich and poor in settings ranging from schools and child care centers to libraries and grocery stores. Without the financial and human resources and political clout of the wealthy, institutions in poorer neighborhoods, including schools, may decline in quality.

Perhaps most important, increasing residential segregation by income has led to increasing school segregation by income. From 1972 to 1988, schools became more economically segregated, and teenagers from affluent families were less and less likely to have classmates from low-income families (Altonji & Mansfield, 2011). As a result, a child from a poor family is two to four times as likely as a child from an affluent family to have classmates in either elementary or high school with behavioral problems and low skills. This sorting matters because the weak cognitive skills and behavioral issues of many low-income children have a negative effect on their classmates' learning.

Student mobility resulting from these residential changes poses another threat to achievement. Urban families living in poverty move frequently, and, as a result of school sorting by socioeconomic status, children from poor families are especially likely to attend schools with relatively high numbers of new students arriving during the school year. Recent research has shown that children attending elementary schools with considerable student mobility make less progress in mathematics than do children in schools with less student turnover. Moreover, these negative effects apply to students who themselves are residentially stable as well as to those who are not and are likely to stem from disruption of instruction caused by the entry of new students into a class (Raudenbush, Jean, & Art, 2011).

Poor teacher quality, too, contributes to the weak performance of students in high-poverty schools. A substantial body of research has shown that schools serving high concentrations of poor, nonwhite, and low-achieving students find it difficult to attract and retain skilled teachers. In addition to preferring schools with relatively low proportions of low-achieving students, teachers favor schools in neighborhoods with higher-income residents and less violent crime (Boyd et al., 2011). In high-poverty schools, teacher commitment, parental involvement, and student achievement all tend to be lower.

Yet another challenge facing many of the nation's schools concerns the school placements of new immigrants,

many of whom speak little English. Today's immigrants are more likely than their predecessors in the early 1970s to come from high-poverty countries. Black and Hispanic immigrants to New York City are much more likely to be poor than are white immigrants from Eastern Europe, and they are more likely to attend elementary and middle schools with native-born black and Hispanic students who are poor (Schwartz & Stiefel, 2011). Thus, while immigrants are not segregated from the native-born in New York City schools, their residential patterns contribute to segregation of schools by socioeconomic status and race.

Helping Low-Income Children

By widening the gap in educational opportunities between children from low- and higher-income families, increasing income inequality jeopardizes the upward socioeconomic mobility that has long held our pluralistic democracy together. Improving educational outcomes for children growing up in low-income families is therefore critical to the nation's future and requires a combination of policies that support low-income families and measures to improve the quality of schools that low-income children attend.

The United States has implemented a range of policies to raise the buying power of low-income families, including the Child Tax Credit, the Earned Income Tax Credit, cash assistance programs, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps). Recent studies show that the increases in family incomes produced by these programs result in improved educational outcomes for young children and health in adulthood (Hoynes, Schanzenbach, & Almond, 2013). Unfortunately, these programs are under attack as Congress seeks ways to reduce the federal budget deficit.

Improving the quality of schools attended by low-income children poses even more important and difficult challenges. As a nation, we have failed to appreciate the extent to which technological innovations have brought changes in the skills needed to succeed in today's economy. Moreover, the rising economic and social inequality produced by technology and globalization has weakened neighborhoods and families in ways that make effective school reform all the more difficult. For a variety of historical reasons, our nation has not learned how to provide the consistent supports that schools—especially those serving large numbers of low-income children—must have to succeed… .

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READING 28

The Rules of the Game and the Uncertain Transmission of Advantage

Middle-Class Parents' Search for an Urban Kindergarten

Annette Lareau, Shani Adia Evans, and April Yee

Annette Lareau, Shani Adia Evans, and April Yee introduce the idea of field to help understand the subtle processes that segregate schools. Using Bourdieu's concept of field, they explain that residential segregation, as described in the previous reading by Greg J. Duncan and Richard J. Murnane, is not the only factor in segregating schools by social class. While school choice is seen as an answer to segregating schools by social class, Lareau, Evans, and Lee highlight the need to understand the "rules of the game" in which parents "choose" schools for their children. As they describe, these rules are so complicated and arbitrary that even middle-class parents cannot always successfully use their social and cultural capital to gain admittance of their children into the best schools in their communities. This reading illustrates how much knowledge and influence are required to get into quality schools, as well as the between-school differences in the quality that exist within one district.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What do the authors mean by "field" and "cultural, social, and economic capital"?
2. Why was it so important for parents to get their children into particular schools for kindergarten?
3. Because the focus of this reading was on middle-class parents and children, how do you think working-class children will fare when enrolling their children in this district?

Social stratification studies have demonstrated that parents transmit important advantages to their children (Duncan and Murane 2011). Scholars drawing on Bourdieu have explored how parents transmit social class advantages to children via social, economic, and especially, cultural capital. For example, much work examines the correlation between possession of cultural capital (i.e., highly valued skills, knowledge, and information) and desirable outcomes (see, e.g., DiMaggio 1982; Dumais 2006; Dumais and Ward 2010; Gabler and Kaufman 2006; Jaeger 2009; Lareau and Weininger 2003; Pitzalis and Porcu 2016). Research also shows that social (i.e., social ties) and economic (i.e., wealth and income) capital is advantageous for children's life chances (Dika and Singh 2002; Duncan and Murane 2011; see also Bourdieu 1986; Coleman 1988).

From "The Rules of the Game and the Uncertain Transmission of Advantage: Middle-Class Parents' Search for an Urban Kindergarten," by A. Lareau, S. A. Evans, and A. Yee, *Sociology of Education*, 89(4), 279–299. Copyright 2016 by American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

Yet, Bourdieu (1984; Bourdieu and Passeron 1979) was clear that the value of capital is not intrinsic. Rather, the actions of parents and children gain value only in a specific field (Bourdieu 1984). Attention to the field, however, means scholars' focus needs to shift from looking at parents and children to also examining the "rules

of the game." It is these rules that determine what actions are given value. Although some school studies point to the importance of institutional standards (Calarco 2011; Cucchiara 2013), this focus on the rules of the game and parents' actions is relatively unusual. As a result, many educators and policy makers see middle-class actions as inherently valuable, rather than looking at how the rules of the game privilege some actions more than others.

In addition, many of these studies presume that the process of gaining advantages (through the application of this capital) is relatively automatic. This is a shaky premise. For example, a significant outlay of cultural, social, and economic capital may help parents secure advantages that contribute to their children's admission to highly selective colleges, but it does not and cannot guarantee that outcome. Models need to take into account both the situational meaning of capital and the uncertainty in parents' efforts to use their capital to transmit advantages to their children.

Furthermore, studies have overestimated the degree to which middle-class parents can control the transmission of advantage to their children. Although Bourdieu (1976, 1984) was clear about the importance of contingency, too often, studies suggest a seamless reproduction of social inequality. The consistent pattern of downward mobility for children of the middle-class has not been sufficiently acknowledged (Pew Charitable Trust 2011). Although the frenzied nature of college admissions has received attention (Stevens 2007), the numerous ways in which middle-class families experience setbacks, anxieties, and pressure in the transmission process have not (but see Demerath 2009). Put differently, even parents rich in widely valued types of cultural, social, and economic capital can encounter setbacks and fail to capitalize on their advantages (Blum 2015; Ramey and Ramey 2010; Stevens 2007). And, given that research shows that social class shapes parents' ability to intervene in schooling (Brantlinger 2003; Lareau 2000), if middle-class parents struggle to master the rules of the game, then we can speculate that learning the rules of the game might be even more challenging for working-class and poor parents. In this article, we explore how the rules of the game shape parents' abilities to access high-status institutions, which they hope will transmit advantages to their children.

The arena of school choice is an apt setting to investigate these matters. The very term *school choice* implies that the power rests with parents and children. This is certainly true in some settings, but in many urban school districts, there is fierce competition among families for limited school slots (Hannah-Jones 2016; Saulny 2003). In such areas, families do not ultimately choose schools; schools choose from interested families (see Pattillo 2015). Too often, school choice scholars focus their attention on families' application and enrollment patterns across different types of schools, as well as parents' characteristics in charter schools, traditional public schools, or private schools, rather than focus on the challenges of the selection process (Billingham and Hunt 2016; Lauen 2007; Martinez et al. 1995; Phillips, Larsen, and Hausman 2015; Sikkink and Emerson 2008). Thus, there is a need to understand more deeply the complex rules that shape enrollment decisions in urban settings.

In this article, we use qualitative data to illuminate how middle-class parents in a large, urban district went about enrolling their children in kindergarten for the first time. The 45 middle-class families in our study activated their cultural, social, and economic resources as they sought to comply with the rules in the field to

gain desired placements for their young children. We also interviewed administrators in 18 of these schools to learn more about the selection criteria. We find the rules of the game to be complex, hard to learn about, and implemented inconsistently. Inaccurate information was routinely handed out by school officials. In this context, cultural, social, and economic capital that helped parents navigate these institutional rules had the potential to be profitable. But even parents with deep reservoirs of capital did not attain their first choice when they misunderstood the rules of the game or faced an imbalance of supply and demand for slots in highly desired schools.

The Urban Kindergarten Field: An Uneven Landscape

We define the kindergarten admissions field in this large, northeastern city as consisting of three systems of schools (private, charter, and traditional public). The elementary schools within these systems are organized into a hierarchy that, although contested, has a core number of schools about which respondents, websites, and the local media agree on the relative ranking. As noted earlier, the field includes the schools as well as the formal and informal criteria for admission to kindergarten—these are "the rules of the game." The rules varied in the three systems of schools, and there were sometimes shadow systems, making it difficult for parents to master the rules… . But across the systems, the overall pattern was the same: for the schools to admit their children, parents needed to master complex rules as well as have some measure of good luck.

The field has many significant aspects, including the varying levels of success these schools have in promoting children's academic achievement. We chose to focus, however, on only one aspect: the degree to which spots at desired schools were available to families. This is a particularly important element of this field, because parents see kindergarten as setting children on an advantageous educational track.

The large, northeastern city in which the study took place is racially diverse, with large white and black populations and smaller Latino and Asian communities. In recent decades, a growing number of young, white professionals have moved into the city; however, the public school system enrolls relatively few white children. Most neighborhood public schools in respondents' communities serve a majority-black student body. Over two thirds of children in the school district are poor or nearly poor. The district has many fiscal challenges, and many of the traditional public schools do poorly on state exams… . About one third of students in the city are not enrolled in the public school district and instead attend private or parochial schools; there has been a dramatic rise in charter school enrollments.

… Our interviews with parents and educators …drew a portrait of a district with a limited number of schools with the reputation of being "good." Among scholars of education, the meaning of a "good school" is subject to debate (Bryk et al. 2010). Scholars have also considered how race and class shape parents' perceptions of school quality (Byrne 2006; Johnson and Shapiro 2003). In this article, we do not attempt to report a ranking of the schools based on students' outcomes; we were struck, however, by the relative consensus on school quality among the middle-class parents we interviewed, journalists, and in social media.

A small number of private schools are considered to be at the top of the hierarchy. Ranked directly beneath the private schools are four traditional public schools that middle-class parents described as desirable (i.e., Brownside, Fullerton, Ledford, and Lab Public). These schools also consistently appear on the media's "best schools" lists, and they receive relatively high rankings on websites and blogs. In addition, some up-and-coming traditional public schools have a disputed status (e.g., Clayton, Connelly, Filbert, Grey, and Lincoln). Some parents hoped these schools "would be ready" in the future; other parents in our study considered these schools when their children were not admitted to the more highly desired public schools and they could not afford elite private school tuition. Although parents had many charter schools to choose among, the parents in our sample considered only a small number of them, referring to the same five or six over and over as the

"good schools." At the bottom of the status hierarchy are neighborhood elementary schools that largely serve students who are eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch.

The highly desired public elementary schools enrolled more white and Asian students, and fewer black students, than did most district schools. Compared to the district overall, the percentage of children eligible for free and reduced-price lunch was much smaller at the schools the middle-class parents considered desirable (i.e., 50 percent at desired schools, compared to about 75 percent in the district). However, it is striking that schools with the reputation as being the "best" did not necessarily have the highest test scores. For example, white and black parents uniformly described Ledford, but not Grey, in glowing terms. Yet, … the percentage of students achieving math proficiency was higher at Grey (84 percent) than at Ledford (78 percent). In addition, some elementary schools with test scores comparable to the highly desired schools enrolled primarily black students. None of the white parents mentioned these schools as an option, but some black parents did consider them, a point we will return to below.

The Rules of the Game: What Schools Required

Each of the three systems (i.e., traditional public, charter, and private schools) had multiple rules for gaining admission. Overall, information regarding kindergarten enrollment was scarce and difficult to find. Private schools provided more information on websites than did charter schools or traditional public schools that accepted transfer students. None of the schools, however, provided the information parents most wanted: the criteria for admission, the best strategies for securing admission, and the actual likelihood of their children being admitted.

Moreover, there was no single source parents could consult to gain information about all possible school choices, deadlines for applications, and criteria for admission. Instead, parents in our study needed to find, collect, and make sense of information for each school they were interested in. Most gathered information on many schools and, to ensure a positive outcome, applied to multiple schools. Some parents, for example, applied to more than 10 different schools. In this section, we seek to demonstrate the sheer complexity of the process of securing a kindergarten spot that middle-class parents found desirable within the urban district.

Traditional public schools

The most straightforward way for parents to enroll their children in kindergarten in this city was to buy a home in the catchment area of a traditional public school they considered to be desirable. But this was accompanied by a rule: houses had to be within the exact boundary, and sometimes the boundary went down the middle of the street. School leaders generally enforced the rule strictly. Moreover, the school district had the right to change boundaries over time. Hence, information about the exact boundary was essential.

Accurate information, however, was hard to find. Unlike other neighboring districts, this district did not post a clear map of the boundaries at the time of the study. (Today, the district has a website where parents can enter an address to find the assigned school, but the website admonishes parents *not* to rent or buy a home based on the website information.) And information from school officials could be inaccurate. For example, Sophie Kandis (a white middle-class parent) reported calling Brownside School (a highly desired public

school) when she and her husband were purchasing a new home, to see if they would be in the catchment. She was told the new home was in the boundaries, so they "signed the paper" for the purchase. Shortly thereafter, as they chatted with another parent at the playground while they pushed their three-year-old children on the swings, they were dumbfounded to learn their new home was outside the boundary… .

They got out of their contract and moved to a different house inside Brownside's catchment. Parents need knowledge (encompassed within Bourdieu's conception of cultural capital), which they often learn from their social networks. In this case, the parents' social tie provided extremely valuable information, given the rigid rule about attendance boundaries.

Some parents had the cultural capital to know about the highly desired neighborhoods, but they lacked the economic capital to move there. Buying a home within desired catchment areas typically required paying a premium of $100,000 or more, compared to houses just outside the catchment. For example, Ms. Carlton, a black graduate student and parent of two, was priced out of the catchment areas she desired. When asked whether she considered schools when deciding where to live, she replied,

> I did, and I kind of felt like we couldn't afford the areas that had good neighborhood schools, and in my mind there's only a handful of those… . I know of some parents who live in the Lab Public catchment and I was envious of them 'cause they had almost a guarantee of getting their child a quality education.

Without the economic capital needed to guarantee access to one of those schools, Ms. Carlton had feelings of "desperation" before her child was admitted via lottery to a highly desired charter school. In short, economic capital was essential to gain access to the highly desired public schools, but these resources were valuable only if parents complied with complex district boundaries.

Traditional public school transfers: Formal rules

The public school district allowed families to transfer to other neighborhood schools if a school had room. Highly desired neighborhood schools had very few slots available for transfer students. In interviews, principals of three of the four highly desired neighborhood schools reported that they were filled to capacity by children in the catchment area, and they had not admitted a single student from outside of the neighborhood that year. The fourth school, Ledford, did accept some out-of-catchment students; the number of transfer students varied from year to year, but most years it was under 25. This information was not publicly available.

Trying to transfer children from their assigned school to a more highly desired traditional public school was a challenging enterprise that required gathering elusive, time-sensitive information; filling out forms; and in some cases, making in-person visits to schools. Formally, there is a districtwide lottery (held at the district office) for these coveted spots. The district website instructs parents to fill out a form, bring it to the district office, and have it stamped by a particular date in early November. Parents may list as many as five schools as transfer destinations. These steps are clearly stated, but two additional, key pieces of information are not

publicized. Three of the schools considered to be the best are at capacity; in recent years, they have not accepted any transfer students. Therefore, knowledgeable parents did not "waste" a slot by listing one of these schools. In addition, the order in which parents listed their choice of schools was important. Ms. Dixon, a white parent who worked as a high-level program administrator at a prestigious university, recounted her experience with the process:

> [When] I filled out the application, I didn't realize that you were supposed to be realistic … you were supposed to put your first choice at … what you could reasonably get into. I thought it said to list it in your order of preference, so I put number one, Lab Public School because if you're gonna ask me, obviously where do I want this kid to go to school, that's where I want. Number two, Brownside, because … it's the second best school in the city. That's where I want my kid to go to school. And then I … went down to the more realistic and I put Clayton as three and I put Ledford as four. I later learned that in order to get your kid on the wait list at Ledford, you have to put Ledford as one.

This parent possessed and activated quite a bit of capital: she had valuable knowledge. She knew about the deadline. She knew that she needed to file with the district office as well as the school. She filled out the paperwork. She delivered it. But she was missing one crucial piece of information. In addition, the district had an oversupply of applications at Ledford. She ultimately enrolled her son in Clayton, an up-and-coming school.

Ms. Thompson, a black parent of one son, worked in an insurance office and was similarly misled by incomplete information from the district website. Although she had a thick social network with her siblings and extended family, aside from a coworker, she knew very few other parents with children entering kindergarten. Almost all of her knowledge about the school process came from her research online and telephone conversations with school district officials. One official did not tell her how to fill out the form correctly:

> The reason why I found that out, I called the school district and I was asking them again about that form … and this is when he didn't get into Ledford and I was trying to get him into Laughlin. And the [school district] said, "You know what, because it's out of your boundary you would have had to fill this out. You would have had to list that school on that form."

At this time, Ms. Thompson had already submitted the form, and the deadline had passed to list all of her preferred schools:

> I found out that if I ever wanted him to go [somewhere else] I still would have had to list them on that form for the school district. So I missed three opportunities… . I could have filled out that one form, put Ledford, Applewood, and Watts, and Laughlin all on that one form that I didn't know

about.

By listing only one school, she had limited her options. Ms. Thompson had also filled out lottery forms for a charter school (discussed below), but her son was number 14 on the wait list. The rejections were very difficult. She said, "I cried. I was heartbroken." Her son was scheduled to go to her neighborhood school, where she felt "the teachers are not as patient with these children… . The whole school system is just—it sucks to be honest… . They really do our kids a disadvantage." At the last minute, her coworker told her about a newly opened charter school, and her son was admitted. But although she had made multiple phone calls (twice to the school district and to three different schools), talked with her family members and coworkers, and read online extensively, her lack of knowledge about how to fill out the form led to problems. In her view, she narrowly avoided disaster.

The process even differed across specific schools within the district. One exasperated white parent, Ms. Dixon, reported the following experiences filing transfer applications with two local neighborhood schools:

> They have different systems. So for Ledford, you fill out the application, you put Ledford as one, and the earlier you mail your application, the higher you are on their wait list. So you get back a copy from the school district with a date stamp. If you really are smart, you actually walk it in there yourself. You don't trust it to the mail or trust it to a secretary. So then you get your date. You have your date stamp. You take it to Ledford. You give it to them and they put your on their wait list because chances are you're not gonna get in through the lottery. Clayton's system is different. Clayton, they collect all of the transfer applications at the school. They hang onto them all and on the day that they're all due, they walk them [to the district] as a group… . It's like courting two prom dates. You're trying not to let each school know that you're hedging your bets and so you try not to be insulting to the principal.

Ms. Dixon's reference to "courting two prom dates" highlights the delicate nature of the enterprise. It also highlights her deep knowledge of a highly nuanced system.

The information parents received from individual schools and the district office sometimes conflicted. Because these errors could have major consequences, some parents in our sample felt they needed to double-check information for accuracy… .

… [S]ome parents who called Ledford were told they could walk in and apply, and they would likely get in because children were "rarely" turned away from the school. In fact, parents needed to start by getting an application for the *next* school year and submitting it by a specific (but varying) date in October. The information that rejections were "rare" was also false; most applicants were not admitted to the school. A parent–teacher organization (PTO) officer at Ledford, who led a school tour attended by a member of the research team, seemed aware of the problem of erroneous information. When a parent on the tour complained that he had been misinformed by a receptionist, the PTO officer acknowledged that the Ledford School had

one problematic employee: "[The tour leader] says, 'Honestly, they have two great people in the office and one really bad person, and he probably got the bad person on the phone.'" Thus, conscientious parents could easily get inaccurate information.

Still, some families had a successful outcome in the transfer process, although it often came very late in the year. For example, Ms. O'Donnell, a white parent who works in publishing and has two children under age five, toured schools and applied to two private schools and two charter schools, as well as listing five public schools on the district transfer application. Her son was admitted to an expensive private school (Madison), but her first choice was to transfer to Ledford. However, she was aware of a timing problem:

> You never find out about the transfers early. If you're shooting for public school with a private school backup you never find out from the public school before you have to pay that deposit. So we sent in the 500 bucks … in January.

In late May, she learned her son was admitted to Ledford. It created a dilemma. In the end, she and her husband forfeited the $500 deposit and transferred their child to Ledford. Although the process was not without bumps, her family had a successful outcome. But what mattered here was not simply the amount of their social, cultural, and economic capital but their ability to leverage that capital in accordance with school rules as well as some amount of luck.

Other families fared less well, Ms. Woodley, a white stay-at-home mother married to a social worker, had ruled out sending her daughter Kara to her neighborhood school after a neighbor who taught in the district warned against it. Because the family could not afford private school tuition, Ms. Woodley hoped to get Kara into a charter school or transfer to a "better" public school. She scoured the Internet and used her social networks, talking to other parents at her daughter's preschool, to find out which schools were "good" and which were most likely to accept transfers. She and her husband toured 13 traditional public and charter schools, submitted a transfer application to the school district listing their top five schools, and entered the lotteries of six charter schools. At Ledford, Ms. Woodley followed up with a handwritten letter to the principal, begging for a spot. She activated a formidable amount of cultural and social capital on her daughter's behalf. When Kara was not accepted at any of the schools to which the family applied, Ms. Woodley had a "breakdown." Having no other acceptable option, she secured a transfer for Kara to an up-and-coming public school with disputed status, where a group of middle-class parents were working to bring about reforms that would make the school more to their liking. Ms. Woodley described the entire experience as "a huge nightmare" and "probably one of the worst times of my entire life."

Traditional public school transfers: Shadow system of informal rules

A further complication was that district transfer policies were often implemented inconsistently or ignored. Some educators complained that parents who applied to their schools using the district form were never granted admission to their schools even though they had room for transfers. Connelly's principal explained,

> If you're in one school and you want to go to another school, you have to file an application, which goes [to the district office] downtown. What was happening was a lot of those parents put in an application but they didn't get to Connelly. You know, they [the district office] wouldn't approve it… . I'm not quite sure how the process worked.

This principal's solution was to innovate. She counseled parents to bypass the district's process and come to her directly. In August, district rules permitted her to admit students without a district application. If she had space, she would admit the children…

Through [a] strategy of underreporting the number of slots available to the district, the Ledford principal was able to handpick knowledgeable, highly motivated parents from his own waiting list. Hence, he created an institutional standard where parents who attended the tour, or knew others who attended the tour, have advantages not available to those who rely only on the website. Parents, such as Ms. Thompson, who only sent an application to the district (and did not call the school until her son was not admitted), had significantly lower odds of admission at Ledford.

Parents who understood the transfer shadow system, including when exactly to submit applications, possessed highly valuable capital. For example, Ms. Becker, a white stay-at-home mom who had been researching schools since her son was two, gathered extensive information and was seen as an "expert" on the topic by other parents. She applied to 14 private, public, and charter schools, but Ledford was her first choice. Unlike Ms. Thompson, she was aware that in addition to the district transfer office application, Ledford had a shadow system where parents filed photocopies of the district application at the school. Ms. Becker came prepared to the school's kindergarten open house with a photocopy of her district transfer application… .

She later learned that her son's application was seventh in the pile; he was admitted to the kindergarten class at Ledford. Another parent in our study, Ms. Woodley, submitted her transfer application one week later and was not admitted to Ledford. Hence, Ms. Becker's knowledge and actions, and her shrewd playing of the information she learned, paid off.

It was difficult for us to assess how frequently a shadow system was in effect, but there was clear evidence that some principals used their own approach to admitting children. The school district website makes no mention of any informal or alternative transfer processes. Parents who attended school tours, who had friends who attended tours, or who learned about school-specific informal admissions processes from other sources had highly valuable knowledge that, in some instances, could be transformed into gaining a slot in a highly desired kindergarten. But advising parents to be actively involved in learning about schools without focusing on the forms, principals' actions, and district rules offers an incomplete analysis.

Charter schools

A commonality across charter schools was that, according to state law, oversubscribed schools had to admit students by lottery. However, the crucial lottery application deadlines varied, as did the odds of admission. In some cases, admission rates were similar to Ivy League universities. Our interviews with school officials

revealed that two highly desired charter schools, Global Charter and Adventure Charter, had admission rates between 11 and 16 percent. The admissions director of Adventure Charter estimated that the school received approximately 275 applications for 80 to 90 kindergarten slots. The school had a sibling preference policy, and about half the slots were reserved for siblings of children already attending the school, leaving only 40 to 50 slots for new families. Out of 275 applicants, 45 admitted students is equivalent to a 16 percent admissions rate. Global Charter received approximately 350 applications for 85 kindergarten slots, but about 45 of those slots were reserved for siblings. This left only 40 open slots and an admissions rate of around 11 percent. (At the time of our study, the numbers of applications and slots were not publicized on Global Charter's website. Today they are, but the number of spaces taken up by siblings is not.) The less desired charter schools were less competitive; still, one of these charter schools had a waiting list of 120 students, and another had a waiting list of 141 students.

Charter schools had only one major rule: applications had to be submitted by the deadline… .

Some parents understood how important it was to submit the application on time. Ms. Elliot, who is black, a parent of three, and a social worker, explained that she delayed submitting her child's application to Global Charter as she mulled over the option of homeschooling, but when the deadline arrived, she knew she had to get to the school that day, despite bad weather… .

However, the principal at Global Charter confirmed that some parents were unaware of the application deadline. In August, a month before kindergarten began, some parents were hoping to apply:

> We have people walking in saying, "Can I get an application?" And they [the staff] will remind them or the application will say when you need to apply and deposit the application. But many people are shocked.

Some parents missed the deadlines not by hours or days but by months. The application deadline for many charter schools was in the winter prior to the September of enrollment. Some charter schools announced the due date for applications on their websites very briefly in the fall—and at no other time. Most of the year, the websites stated, "Applications are not being accepted now; check back later for additional information." Parents who called the school were readily told the date; but parents needed to know to call. Because the school district did not send information to parents of children who were three, four, or five years old, there was no standard mechanism for parents to learn about the important, and inflexible, deadline for charter school admissions.[1] Parents were on their own to learn the inflexible rules of the charter school lottery game.

Private schools

In addition to charter and "good" public schools, some parents applied to private schools. Most parents considered independent schools that provided a secular education. These schools varied in cost, ranging between $8,000 and $25,000 annually. Some black parents and a few white parents also considered religious institutions, which tended to have lower tuition rates; for example, Catholic school tuition was approximately

$4,000 per year.

Many of the independent private schools where parents applied were oversubscribed. For example, Arch received around 50 kindergarten applications, but only 8 to 10 children without sibling preference were admitted (i.e., a 16 to 20 percent acceptance rate). Acceptance rates at Madison (63 percent) and Riverdale (73 percent) were higher, but even these private schools typically denied admission for one quarter to one third of applicants. Nonetheless, the odds of being admitted to an oversubscribed private school were higher than being admitted by transfer to a highly desired public school, such as Ledford, or by lottery to the most sought-after charter schools.

To apply to private schools, parents had to submit an application that often included several essay questions about the applicant. The applications had to be accompanied by an application fee, typically $50, and submitted by each school's deadline. Undersubscribed religious schools would immediately enroll applicants, but for oversubscribed schools, the process was more involved… . Some schools required that students take and submit scores for a standardized academic ability test administered by a psychologist (which cost $300 and took a few hours). The oversubscribed schools then invited all applicants for an interview and observation. During the interview, a teacher would take every student aside to individually assess his or her academic skills. Parents worried about how their children would behave in these visits, knowing they did not have control over how their four-year-old would be perceived. School representatives also interviewed parents, either during the student's interview or at another time, to assess the fit of families with the school. Several months after the interview, the oversubscribed schools would send letters offering admission, denying admission, or offering a spot on a wait list.

The timing for applying to private schools was significantly different from the charter school and public school transfer application processes. To maximize their chances of admission at oversubscribed independent schools, savvy parents began the process when their children were three, the year before they were eligible to enroll in prekindergarten (pre-K). Admission rates were much more favorable for applications to pre-K than to kindergarten. (At Arch, for example, the pre-K acceptance rate was 44 percent, compared to its kindergarten acceptance rate of 20 percent.) Moreover, as the Riverdale admissions director revealed, entry into pre-K did not require the testing and evaluation required for kindergarten… .

The advantage of applying to private schools for pre-K and not waiting until kindergarten was not conveyed on websites, in application packets, or during tours.

Despite possessing abundant cultural and economic capital, some parents did not understand the field well enough to deploy their capital effectively. For example, Ms. Terra, a white parent, had a degree from an Ivy League university and, until a recent layoff, had worked in a managerial position in graphic design. Her son attended an expensive nursery school that was renowned for its elaborate art, puppet, and outdoor programs. Ms. Terra had believed that students at this nursery school had a near-automatic admission to Arch, because a number of children in the nursery school had transitioned to Arch in previous years. As noted earlier, however, Arch administrators estimated a 20 percent admittance rate for kindergarteners. Ms. Terra lacked this crucial knowledge. Describing herself retrospectively as "overconfident," she said she filled out only a few

applications, thinking, "I'll get in [to Arch] for sure" …

Ms. Terra's son was not accepted at Arch or at any of the other schools where she had submitted applications. Ms. Terra and her husband were aware of other private schools, such as Madison (where two thirds of children were admitted), but she had "missed the deadline" because she had been busy at work. When her son was not admitted to Arch or Artistic Charter, Ms. Terra went into a tailspin. She could not sleep, had nightmares of dinosaurs eating children, and then began eating obsessively. In the end, Ms. Terra enrolled her son in the kindergarten at their neighborhood catchment school, which had up-and-coming status. She was excited about her son's teacher, who she felt was the "best teacher in the district," but she was anxious about the future. If Ms. Terra had applied to more private schools, she may have found a spot at a school she found desirable. Ms. Terra possessed significant economic and cultural capital that would be valuable in many settings, but because she lacked critically important, field-specific information about the rules of the game and the scarcity of opportunities, her capital lacked value.

A "heartbreaking" process

Middle-class parents found the process agonizing. For example, Ms. Carlton, a black graduate student, explained how the timing of the choice process made the experience of rejection particularly difficult:

> We toured the Arch School, went all the way through the application process, and didn't make it. And when you get those rejection letters, that's heartbreaking—especially when you haven't gotten a single acceptance letter… . We got the Arch School's rejection before she was accepted to Global Charter so that was another … agony… . What if this happens again and again?…

Middle-class parents described being consumed with anxiety about where their children were going to kindergarten in the city. They reported that schools and admissions procedures were a near-constant topic of conversation at playgrounds, at birthday parties, and during informal interactions with neighbors, something we also observed in our fieldwork. Mothers, especially, reported having frequent, long, and anxious conversations with other mothers about these topics. "The main conversation you would hear on the playground," Ms. Adler, a white stay-at-home mother married to a computer programmer, told us, "is 'Where [will] your kid go to school? What have you heard about this school? What have you heard about that school? And what are the options? What do you know? What about this one?' Participating in social and informational networks (including parenting groups) that shared this knowledge provided advantageous social capital.

Yet, some forms of social capital also failed to provide expected advantages. The principal of Global Charter described some of the strategies parents used: "I get letters from councilpersons presenting somebody, saying, 'We know you have a lottery process, but my constituent would like to be considered—a wonderful kid.' I [also] get personal letters [from VIPs]." In tossing these letters aside, this principal was adamant that the charter did not admit children in any way other than a lottery. Others echoed this view.

A common complaint among the parents in our study was that they had no control over a process whose

outcome mattered deeply to them. They did not, as Ms. Woodley noted, "know what the future's going to be, and it's in someone else's hands. You really don't have any control over it." Indeed … parents reported the process to be stressful. In the uncertain landscape of kindergarten admissions, their capital did not always have value, and their strategies for activating capital often failed. The realization that their class resources had limits was an unexpected and unpleasant discovery for many parents. Although it is difficult to truly measure an "outcome" in this process, since parents' expectations kept shifting as the process unfolded, … [I]n our sample of 45 parents, 20 got their children into a highly desired school, 6 had not decided yet, and 19 were in disputed- or low-status schools. Of course, when middle-class families failed to get their children into their first-choice school, this did not mean these children were headed to "bad" institutions; in fact, nearly all the children would attend schools that the parents considered better than the majority of schools in the district. Nonetheless, the rejections demonstrate that profits are not automatic after the investment of capital.

Differences between black and white parents

Overall, white and black middle-class parents described similar experiences with the school choice process. All parents living outside the catchment areas of a few "good" schools found their neighborhood school undesirable. They found the process frustrating and stressful, largely because the rules of the game in the field were complex and opaque.

Yet, there were some differences in how white and black middle-class parents experienced school choice. In our study, as in others, white parents defined schools with large numbers of black children as low quality (see, e.g., Billingham and Hunt 2016; Goyette 2014; Goyette, Farrie, and Freely 2012). Although a number of parents discussed their desire for "diversity," white parents were overwhelmingly averse to enrolling their children in predominantly black settings (Evans 2013). A few black parents spoke of avoiding majority-black schools, but most were less averse to such schools than were white parents. As a result, black parents viewed a wider set of school options as acceptable if not "good." Still, black parents hoped their children would be accepted in one of the few "good" schools. Generally, black parents could gain admission to such schools only by being successful in the district transfer process or charter school lotteries, which had uncertain outcomes. Thus, although black parents had a wider array of acceptable choices, this did not appear to reduce their anxiety and stress over the transfer process and the goal of enrolling in a "good" school.

A number of the black parents were interested in private, religious education. For example, Ms. Coleman, a black parent who worked in education, had two children enrolled at Hickory Charter. Although pleased with her children's placements, when asked what her first choice was, she replied without hesitating:

> To the private school that I went to, because I do want them to have a Christian education. Yes, I definitely want them to have a Christian education. In my book [it is] the biggest thing.

Other black parents echoed this view. This interest contrasted with white parents, who, with few exceptions, did not consider religious schools.

White parents described frequent conversations with other parents about schools and the choice process, but

black parents made fewer mentions of these types of conversations. Some black parents were upset that the school district did not provide more information. A librarian, Ms. Lambert, a black parent, was told by her day care of an information session sponsored by the school district in the winter. But at that meeting, she learned that many of the key deadlines had passed… .

Many (but not all) black parents mentioned solitary online searches when describing their process for learning about schools (Weininger 2014). Although the school choice process was complex and frustrating for all, we find some evidence that white parents were more connected to valuable social capital. At the same time, black parents were willing to consider a wider set of schools for their children.

Discussion

Despite the clear and important role that the rules of the game play in children's success, sociologists have not always sufficiently showcased the importance of the field. Nor have scholars always had a "double vision" and examined both the rules of the game *and* how class position helps children draw on their parents' capital. But without this focus, scholars risk treating particular social and cultural resources as inherently and unchangingly valuable. Researchers fail to consider how the field and the rules of the game matter for determining what is capital and who is able to successfully activate that capital. In contrast, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990:8) argue that the definition of culture is arbitrary, "not being linked by any sort of internal relation to 'the nature of things,'" its legitimacy coming only from the state of competition in the field (see also Bourdieu and Passeron 1979)… .

Note

1. In recent years, the school district has begun to list all the charter application deadlines and the lottery dates. But this information does not include all the charter schools in the district. In addition, the information does not provide the likelihood of admission or whether the school gives priority to siblings. In some cities, parents have published books telling other parents how to apply to kindergarten (Adams 2015).

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READING 29

The Geography of Inequality

Why Separate Means Unequal in American Public Schools

John R. Logan, Elisabeta Minca, and Sinem Adar

There are many possible explanations for why some children achieve and others do not, but one fact we cannot overlook is that schools in the United States still are segregated despite school integration efforts following the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. *It stated that racially separated schools are "inherently unequal." Many argue today that schools have since "resegregated," and the racial distribution of schools in the United States is just as segregated as it was in 1954. In this reading, John R. Logan, Elisabeta Minca, and Sinem Adar revisit the question of whether differences in academic achievement outcomes are related to the racial and social class composition of schools. They consider the current situation, looking more analytically at the patterns of school segregation in the United States today.*

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What factors contribute to our schools being segregated by race?
2. Why does the racial composition of a school matter in predicting the school's academic achievement?
3. Why won't the Race to the Top policy of closing underperforming schools likely increase the academic achievement of black and Hispanic students?

The principal question raised by most research on racial segregation in schools is whether children of different racial and ethnic backgrounds attend different schools. Many studies have traced trends in segregation, which persists at fairly high levels despite substantial desegregation of schools in the 1970s in the wake of the *Brown* decision (Clotfelter 2004; Logan, Oakley, and Stowell 2008). While documenting trends, researchers emphasize that segregation is important not only because it separates children but because it leaves minority children in inferior schools (Orfield and Yun 1999). If many children are being "left behind" in public schools, one hard fact is that those children are disproportionately minorities. Yet until recently it has not been possible to measure these inequalities at a national level. That is our purpose here. We ask what schools minority children attend and how those schools are performing.

From "The Geography of Inequality: Why Separate Means Unequal in American Public Schools," by J. R. Logan, E. Minca, and S. Adar, *Sociology of Education*, 85(3), pp. 287–301. Copyright 2012 by the American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

The assumption is that, all else equal, it is advantageous to attend a school where more students are successful. This is why, for example, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) signed into law in 2002 introduced mechanisms to identify "failing schools" (Borman et al. 2004). We take advantage of the testing requirements

of that legislation to offer a national-level accounting of the performance disparities in the schools attended by white and minority children. We then explore the sources of these disparities, examining what kinds of schools children of different races and ethnicities are attending and how various school characteristics are associated with overall school performance.

There is no doubt about the extent of racial and ethnic disparities in educational outcomes for individual students (Jencks and Phillips 1998; Hallinan 2001; Henderson 2002; Maruyama 2003; Rumberger and Palardy 2005). One review of recent results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that nationwide only 54 percent of black students, compared with 87 percent of white students, performed at or above the basic level on the 2003 eighth-grade reading exam (Stiefel, Schwartz, and Chellman 2008:527). Dropout rates are much higher among black and Hispanic students than among white and Asian students (Mickelson 2003). It is less clear how these differences may be related to the characteristics of the schools that children attend. There has long been a suspicion that school segregation is somehow a factor. In the landmark 1954 case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the U.S. Supreme Court officially declared that the "separate but equal" doctrine established 58 years earlier in *Plessy v. Ferguson* had no place in the field of public education (Whitman 1998). Racially segregated schools, according to the court, were inherently unequal. There was little empirical basis at the time for this claim. We provide new evidence based on school performance on standardized tests, taking into account racial composition as well as other school characteristics such as poverty; location in a central city, suburban, or non-metropolitan setting; and the demographic composition of local residents.

What Schools Do Minority Students Attend?

It is widely reported that minority students attend worse schools than non-Hispanic whites do (Bankston and Caldas 1998; Roscigno 1998), although few studies have had direct measures of school-level outcomes. An exception is the study by Crosnoe (2005), which analyzed data on a national sample of kindergarten students, finding that Mexican kindergarteners were in schools with more minorities, higher student poverty levels, lower teacher experience, larger size, and worse community locations than white and Asian students were, even after controlling for individual-level characteristics that might have been expected to produce such disparities. Hanushek and Rivkin (2009), drawing on the extensive database of the Texas Schools Project, found that black students attend schools with a less experienced teaching staff than do white students and that this factor has a significant impact on widening black–white performance differentials between elementary and middle school.

There is more evidence that minority children are more likely [than white children] to be in high-poverty schools. Saporito and Sohoni (2007) found that unlike the typical white child, who attends a public school in which most of the children are above the poverty line, the typical black or Hispanic child attends a public school in which most of the children are below the poverty line. Orfield and Lee (2005) pointed out that more than 60 percent of black and Hispanic students attend high-poverty schools (defined as more than 50 percent poor). Only 18 percent of white students and 30 percent of Asian students attend high-poverty schools. Logan (2002) reported that non-Hispanic whites on average attended public elementary schools where 30 percent of students qualified for free or reduced price lunches, compared with 65 percent for schools attended by the average black student and 66 percent for the average Hispanic student.

Black and Hispanic students are also more likely to attend city schools. The 24 largest central cities (with 4.5 million students) have enrollments that are more than 70 percent black and Hispanic (Orfield and Lee 2005). In 20 of these districts, the student population is 90 percent black.

Which Schools Have Higher Student Performance?

A considerable literature examines how various aspects of the school population, the school district, and school organization affect learning outcomes. Several key factors are highly interrelated: the racial/ethnic composition of the school, poverty level, location in the central city or suburbs, and immigration. In addition, some research has focused on how schools are organized: their size and grade levels. The most sophisticated studies use multilevel analyses, evaluating contextual effects on individual children's outcomes after controlling for their personal characteristics. For our purpose, even simpler designs based on school-level data are relevant.

Many scholars have sought to evaluate the effect of racial segregation on performance (Mercer and Scout 1974; Wells and Crain 1994; Armor 1995; Schofield 1995; Orfield and Eaton 1996; Cutler and Glaeser 1997; Rumberger and Palardy 2005; Bilfulco and Ladd 2006). Several studies suggest a direct and independent effect of racial composition on student performance. Bankston and Caldas (1996, 1997) and Rumberger and Williams (1992) showed that minority concentration is associated with lower achievement on standardized tests. Academic outcomes are generally better for blacks in racially integrated schools (Dawkins and Braddock 1994; Armor 2002). Stiefel et al. (2008) found that the achievement gap between white and nonwhite schoolchildren is greatest between racially segregated schools. Card and Rothstein (2005) concluded that segregation continues to be a major obstacle to equal educational opportunities for minority children and a source of gaps in academic achievement.

Of course the racial composition of schools is strongly correlated with other school characteristics, such as class composition. The classic study of school effects, the Coleman Report (Coleman et al. 1966), provided evidence that the racial isolation of black children in majority minority schools is associated with lower academic achievement. But Coleman demonstrated that these racial differences were primarily attributable to socioeconomic differences between races. He argued that predominantly white schools tended to enroll students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and it was for this reason that the academic performance of these schools was better than that of predominantly minority schools. He found, in short, that apparent contextual effects were really compositional (see also Hauser, Sewell, and Alwin 1976). If there was a contextual effect, in Coleman's view, it was the effect of class composition. A recent study of this question (Chaplin 2002) found that the concentration of poverty within a school is negatively associated with student performance and later outcomes, even after controlling for a student's own family background (see also a number of prior studies, including Chubb and Moe 1990; Jencks and Mayer 1990; Gamoran 1996; Lee and Smith 1997).

Another relevant factor is metropolitan location, which is related to both racial and class composition and strongly associated with educational outcomes. For example, Swanson (2008) found that high school graduation rates are 15 percentage points lower in the nation's urban schools than in schools located in the suburbs. And in 12 cities, 9 of which are in the Northeast and Midwest, the city–suburban graduation gap exceeds 25 percentage points. In addition to the contextual effects of concentrated poverty, it is argued that poor central city schools are more likely to have inadequate resources and funding, as well as a less qualified

teaching staff, compared with schools in suburban school systems (Eaddy et al. 2003; Hochschild and Scovronick 2003).

There has been considerable discussion of whether immigration has an independent effect on school performance, apart from the observed differences related to the Hispanic and Asian shares of the student population. Most studies have been conducted at the individual level, but they have clear implications for school-level relationships. Immigration appears to be a positive factor, as immigrant youth or those with immigrant parents tend to perform better than otherwise similar native-born students (Fuglini 1997; Zhou and Bankston 1998; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Glick and White 2003). Schwartz and Stiefel (2006) reported an immigrant advantage over native-born students on test scores in New York City. A subsequent analysis (Conger, Schwartz, and Stiefel 2007) found that immigrant students also have higher attendance rates and are less likely to be enrolled in special education classes. Scholars point to strong traditional family and community ties among some immigrant groups and a strong emphasis on education as a means of advancement as protective factors (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Bankston 1998).

Discussion and Conclusion

This is the first national-level study at all grade levels to look beyond the racial segregation of schools to the question of inequalities in the performance of schools that children of different races and ethnicities attend. Our concern is the geography of opportunity. We have no information on group-specific test scores. Rather, we are identifying the schools that children are taught in. In the unlikely event that school test scores are a function only of the ability or willingness to learn of the students who attend them, these results would have little interest. However, our assumption is that attending a school in the 60th percentile of the distribution provides a significant advantage for the educational future of a child in comparison to attending a school in the 35th percentile. And that is the order of magnitude of differences that we find here. Public schools are not only separate but also unequal.

The key result is the simple accounting of disparities presented… . Disparities are clear already in the elementary grades, where black, Hispanic, and Native American children attend schools that are on average at the 35th to 40th percentile of performance compared with other schools in the same state. White and Asian children are in schools at close to the 60th percentile. The degree of disparity is not much different at higher grades, and there is almost no change across grades in relative reading scores. At higher grade levels there is noticeable improvement in mathematics scores in the schools attended by Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans, which could result from the larger attendance zones of middle and high schools. But this trend is not found for blacks.

The multivariate analyses provide more information about the sources of these disparities, which are deeply rooted in differences that are linked to race. Because we are working with cross-sectional data with no information on educational processes within schools, the results should be viewed as descriptive of patterns rather than as an effort to find the causes of differences. Our first step, the latent cluster analysis, is a search for patterns in the data. It leads us to identify six types of schools. This result is more complex than the simple model of affluent-white-suburban versus poor-minority-central-city schools, although that dichotomy is part of the story. We found three kinds of high-poverty schools. One of these is disproportionately located in central cities, although a considerable share is also in suburbs, and it is more Hispanic than black. Another is more heavily black but is quite mixed in location. The third type of high-poverty school is also in mixed locations, and this type is also mixed in racial composition. What most distinguishes this third type of school from other high-poverty schools is that nearly three-quarters of Native American children attend this type. These three types of high-poverty schools are the usual venue for minority children; together, they account for about 27 percent of white students in public elementary schools across the nation and 29 percent of Asian students, but a very large majority of black, Hispanic, and Native American students.

The remaining three school types all have lower levels of poverty, but they differ among themselves in other respects. Closest to the stereotype of white exclusion is the second cluster, schools that are nearly 90 percent white, lowest in poverty, and predominantly in suburbs. Another similar type, the fifth cluster, is even more exclusively white but is most commonly found in nonmetropolitan areas. Nonmetropolitan schools tend to be overlooked in the segregation literature, but they are an important component of the educational system.

More challenging to the usual stereotype is the fourth cluster. It represents relatively affluent and disproportionately suburban schools with a clear white majority but with nontrivial shares of other groups. These are the schools where black and Hispanic students are likely to find more access to educational advantage, and they are also the schools where most white and Asian students have opportunities to encounter other groups. About a quarter of white students and nearly half of Asian students attend these schools. A quarter of Native Americans are also found here. But less than 10 percent of black and Hispanic students have access to this resource.

The implications of this pattern of segregation across types of schools are brought home in the analysis of predictors of school performance. Consider first the finding that the racial composition of schools matters in itself—schools with more minorities do worse. Because race and poverty are highly correlated in the United States, we would expect some racial differences even if race in itself did not matter. However, we find substantial race differences even after controlling for poverty and other factors. One interpretation is the one put forward by the Supreme Court, that segregation alone creates inequality. Another is that minority students under current social conditions bring down a school's average test score. If that were true, creating more diverse schools would improve school quality for minorities at the expense of whites. Yet another possibility is that parents of white children take into account both the race and class composition of schools and their reputation for performance when deciding where to live and that their selectivity contributes to the disparities that we have measured. In that case, of course, one would have to explain why black and Hispanic parents do not make the same calculations. Possibly they have fewer choices, even taking into account their own income and education (a point often made in the literature on residential segregation).

Poverty has as large an effect as the black or Hispanic share of students. This could also be a simple compositional effect—poor students (perhaps because of their home or neighborhood situation or parental background) are known to perform worse than students from affluent families. It could also be a contextual effect, as some other studies have suggested—the overall composition of the school could affect all students, or high-poverty schools might in some cases have fewer educational resources. But regardless of the reason, this finding implies that, independent of racial segregation, class segregation is associated with a lower quality of school available to minority students. It supports the view of some policy analysts that race-neutral school assignment based on equalizing the class composition of schools could have strong positive effects. Here, too, such a policy could have a negative impact on students who are currently in advantaged positions.

Family background in the community is another powerful factor, but our results show that adults' educational levels matter much more than issues of family disruption. Another community characteristic, the percentage foreign born, has no significant positive or negative effect. This finding should alleviate concerns about whether immigration itself is a risk factor for schools. We might expect these variables to work more strongly at the individual level, if we knew the performance of each child and had information on his or her parents' immigration status, education, or marital situation.

Finally there is no evidence that metropolitan location independently affects school performance. Low-performing schools may be found in every zone of the metropolis, depending on the other factors identified

here. This result is a reminder of the increasing heterogeneity of suburban regions, where the disparities between communities can be as great as the overall difference between city and suburb.

Taken together, these data show that racial inequalities in education are large and deeply entrenched in the society. When *typical* black, Hispanic, and Native American children are assigned to schools that perform so much below the median, few can be in above-average schools and a substantial share are in schools well below the 30th percentile. Attacking this pattern by focusing on a few low-achieving schools (the NCLB [No Child Left Behind] policy to close failing schools at the very bottom of the distribution) can have only marginal results. To drive this point home, we have calculated a simulation of what the distribution of students would be across schools under a scenario that represents a very successful implementation of NCLB school closures… . Suppose we could close all the schools that perform under the 10th percentile. Suppose we could reassign these students to other schools in proportion to white students' presence in the remaining schools. This would be a stunning change because black, Hispanic, and Native American children would gain much greater access to the resources of predominantly white schools. More than a quarter of them would be in schools that are currently above the 80th percentile.

So what is the result? Less than 20 percent of white and Asian students but about 35 percent of black and Hispanic students would still be in schools below the 31st percentile. About 15 percent of black and Hispanic students but close to 30 percent of white and Asian students would be in schools above the 81st percentile. This is because the disparities across groups not only are the result of minorities' concentration in the worst schools but are found across the whole distribution of "non-failing" schools. The simulation is simply a way to emphasize the depth of disparities.

Aside from dealing with failing schools, trends in residential segregation will not soon move many black children into more diverse neighborhood schools, and residential changes are exacerbating rather than solving the isolation of Hispanic children. Since progress in school desegregation has come to a halt in most parts of the country, partly due to the strong boundaries between school districts, and court rulings are creating obstacles to existing desegregation plans, there is little chance for improvement from this source. Efforts at equalization of poverty rates across schools, which could make a strong contribution, will also run up against the barrier of district boundaries. Decades after the *Brown v. Board* desegregation order, separate and unequal continues to be the pattern in American public education.

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READING 30

Explaining Racial Variations in Education

Caroline Hodges Persell

In this reading, Caroline Hodges Persell, a highly regarded sociologist of education, explores various theories to explain unequal educational outcomes for children of different races. She examines genetic, structural, and cultural explanations and proposes a new approach that incorporates structural, cultural, and interactional factors. Persell's argument is important because the explanations we give for racial differences in education influence how we approach solutions to these problems.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Do Persell's arguments help you to understand the different college completion rates listed by race in the introduction to this chapter?
2. Which of the reasons that Persell discusses for racial inequality in education do you think are most plausible?
3. Given Persell's arguments, what steps do you think should be taken to improve the educational experience of racial minority groups?

Racial differences exist in many aspects of education, including access, resources, experiences, and outcomes. This reading begins by considering educational outcomes such as achievement and completion, why they are important, and how they vary by race/ethnicity. It then examines existing explanations, proposes a new synthesis, and considers relevant evidence.

Much of the research on racial/ethnic differences has been based on black-white comparisons for several reasons. Historically and today, blacks[1] and Native Americans have been the most intensely "hyper-segregated" group, that is, isolated from other groups, clustered together in small concentrated areas. Moreover, slavery of blacks created a system of stratification based on race where whites enjoyed political, economic, legal, and social rights that were denied to blacks on the basis of color. Thus, in the United States blackness and whiteness "are the symbolic anchors of our racial hierarchy" (Morning, 2007). Where data exist on other racial/ethnic groups it is included here. It is important to stress that race is a socially constructed, somewhat fluid, changeable, and complex concept, containing considerable variation within whatever categories are used (Omi, 2001). "Races are labels, not people," and some individuals and groups can change races over time (Morning, 2007). Boundary crossing varies widely between racial/ethnic groups, as does the extent of domination experienced by groups.

Variations in Educational Outcomes

Of the possible educational outcomes, considerable research has focused on differences in educational achievement. Despite individual exceptions, there are variations in the educational achievement of African American, Latino/a, and Native American students, which, on average, is lower than that of whites and Asian Americans. Gaps occur in standardized test scores, grade point averages, rates of placement in gifted or special education programs, dropout rates, and college attendance and graduation rates (Hallinan, 2001; Kovach & Gordon, 1997; National Center for Education Statistics, 2001; Nettles & Perna, 1997). These differences in educational achievement outcomes are significant predictors of an individual's employment opportunities and wages, as is race.[2] Over the past 30 years, racial/ethnic differences in reading achievement declined until 1988 when they increased some until 1992 before leveling off through 2004. Math achievement gaps declined until 1990 and remained pretty level through 2004 (Berends, Lucas, & Penaloza, 2008).

Explanations for Different Outcomes

For a long time, no research could fully explain racial variations in academic achievement, although researchers[3] using different data sets found that a small number of social factors could statistically eliminate racial differences in achievement among young children. Black and white children of the same age and birth weight, whose mothers had the same test scores, education, occupation, income, and wealth, whose mothers were the same age when they had their first child, and who had the same number of children's books or similar cultural resources in their homes, scored the same on their reading and math tests. But, you may be thinking, black and white children are not equally likely to share these indicators of life chances, so we need to explain (or understand) why they do not. A second puzzle is why by the third grade the achievement gap between those same white and black children reappeared, and why the factors that explained it statistically among kindergarteners no longer fully explain the gap among older children. Scholars have considered genetic, cultural, and structural explanations for racial variations in achievement.

Genetic Explanations

There have been recurrent efforts to offer genetic explanations for racial/ethnic differences in educational achievement (e.g., Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1969). In their 1994 book, *The Bell Curve*, Herrnstein and Murray presented evidence showing that when socioeconomic status was controlled, racial differences in educational achievement remained. Their measures of social factors were very incomplete, however. They then went on to suggest that the remaining difference must be due to genetic differences in intelligence (IQ) between the races since it was not explained by social factors. However, intelligence is not a simple, one-dimensional concept (Fischer et al., 1996; Gardner, 1983, 1993). Nor is intelligence unchanging through time and experience, as evidenced by Flynn's (2007) research showing a rise in western countries of roughly 15 IQ points in a single generation. Neither is intelligence rooted in a particular gene. In short, genetic explanations lack empirical support, and race is seen by social scientists as being a socially constructed concept, rather than a biological or genetic entity. Writing about the IQ test score gap, Nisbett (1998, p. 101) concluded, "The most relevant studies provide no evidence for the genetic superiority of either race, but strong evidence for a substantial environmental contribution to the IQ gap between blacks and whites. Almost equally important, rigorous interventions do affect IQ and cognitive skills at every stage of the life course." Studies of mixed-race children with one white and one black parent show that children with white mothers and black fathers have considerably higher IQs than those with black mothers and white fathers (Nisbett, 1998, p. 100). Although their genetic inheritance is similar, their social exposure to activities favored by a predominantly white society differs according to the race of their mothers. If environment, not genes, is central, what aspects of environment matter? Cultural explanations are frequently offered.

Cultural Explanations

Standing in apparent opposition to a genetic explanation for racial/ethnic differences in school achievement, sociocultural explanations tend to root the causes in the cultural values, parenting practices, and linguistic

codes of families and children, and some research is consistent with such an explanation. A broader measure of family environment, including grandmother's education, explained two-thirds of the racial gap in achievement (Phillips, Crouse, & Ralph, 1998, p. 138), twice as much as earlier studies. Ogbu's (2003) observations of greater degrees of "disengagement" from school among black compared to white students are also a cultural explanation. While such cultural explanations—such as family environment, parenting practices, and student behavior—explain more of the achievement gap than do traditional measures of socioeconomic status (SES) alone, they fail to explain when and how such potentially important cultural differences arise.

Cross-cultural research suggests the importance of contextual factors for differences in the culture, IQ, and educational achievements of different racial/ethnic groups. For example in Japan, the ethnic-minority Buraku have lower IQs and educational achievement than the dominant, ethnic-Ippan group, even though the two groups are of the same race. However, when members of both groups migrate to the United States, they do equally well on standardized tests and in school (Ogbu, 2001, 2003; Ogbu & Stern, 2001). These cross-cultural findings are consistent with evidence that other social factors, which Herrnstein and Murray did not measure, affect different achievement levels (Fischer et al., 1996).

Both genetic and cultural explanations attribute the source of failure to children and their families, and unless the cultural explanation pushes beyond individuals to their social contexts, both may have self-fulfilling potency. That is, if people in the larger society come to believe these explanations, such beliefs may contribute to children being taught less. Both genetic and cultural explanations tend to legitimate inequalities and divert attention and reform efforts away from structural inequalities in society, which need to be considered as a source of racial differences in educational achievement.

Structural Explanations

The first structural condition to consider is race, which needs to be viewed not as an individual attribute, but as a system of social relationships that creates systematic advantages for members of one group while the members of another group are systematically disadvantaged (see the important work of critical race theorists such as Bonilla-Silva, 1996, 2001, 2003; Omi, 2001). They see race as a system of organized power in society.

A group's subordinate position in a racialized system of power relations affects its measured intelligence and school achievement through three processes according to Fischer et al. (1996, p. 174): (1) socioeconomic deprivation, (2) racial/ethnic segregation, which concentrates disadvantages and accentuates them, and (3) stigmatization as inferior by the wider society's perception of them. Recent research has statistically eliminated the racial gap in achievement among 10- to 14-year-olds by considering grandparents' characteristics and parenting behaviors (Mandara, Varner, Greene, & Richman, 2009). Another study statistically eliminated the racial gap among 10- to 18-year-olds, suggesting that intergenerational inequalities in wealth and education as well as structural inequalities in neighborhoods, schools, and friends statistically explain the achievement gap (Yeung, Persell, & Reilly, 2010).

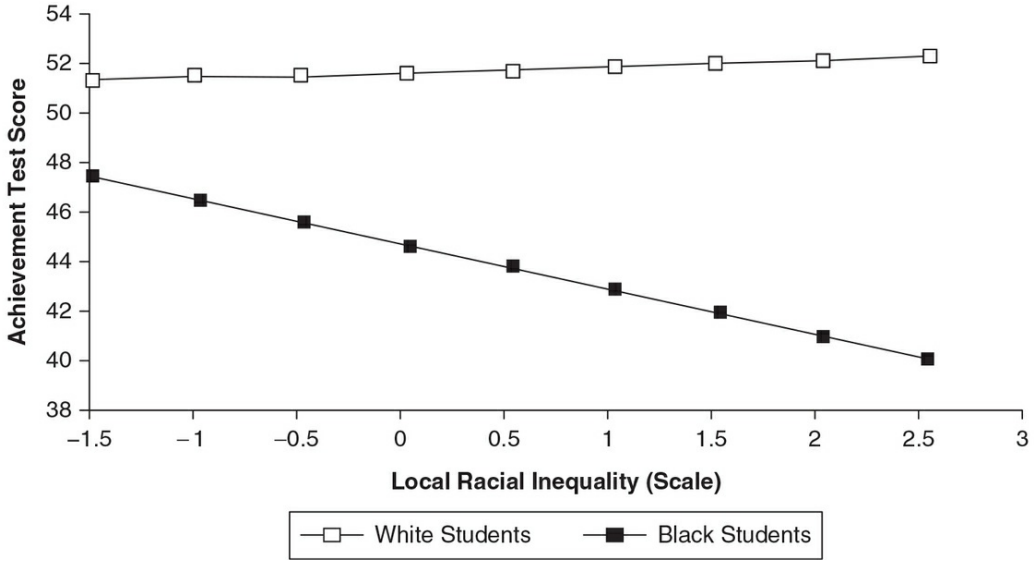
Toward a Fuller Explanation

The explanation proposed here links structural, cultural, and interactional elements. Structurally, it is important to measure the degree of racial stratification (i.e., structured inequality). This includes the historical social, symbolic, economic, educational, and political domination of one socially defined race over another either in different nations or in different regions of the same country. Those historical legacies are related to economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital (Lewis, 2003), wealth (Conley, 1999; Oliver & Shapiro, 1997), and an individual's sense of efficacy.

Historical and current racial/ethnic stratification is related to *socialization contexts*, particularly neighborhoods, families, and schools. Racial stratification, ideologies, and socializing contexts shape and constrain *culture, interactions, and responses* that occur between parents and children, between teachers and students, between parents and teachers, and among peers. All three major components in the model are implicated in creating racial/ethnic differences in *educational outcomes*. The importance of multiple, interrelated factors is consistent with the evidence that relatively small educational differences between children in kindergarten grow in magnitude the longer they are in school. Since race/ethnicity and educational achievement are related to occupations, incomes, marital status, housing, social respect, and opportunities for the next generation, they have intergenerational consequences. One reason individuals may work hard in school is to help their children thrive. So the degree to which such "payoffs" of education vary for different races may undermine confidence in the system.

Historical and contemporary structural inequalities between races/ethnicities have been well documented in income, wealth, politics, prison populations, and social status.[4] When the degree of black-white inequality is measured, the achievement gap is greater in U.S. counties with more stratification by color. Including the local class context and the local racial context in which families, schools, and students were located revealed that family and school influences on educational achievement and attainment "are themselves embedded in, and partially a function of, broader structures and spatial variations in class- and race-based opportunity" (Roscigno, 1999, pp. 159–163). Class context (measured at the county level) is related to race, with blacks significantly more likely than whites to live in communities with larger numbers of families in poverty (Roscigno, 1999). What is really important to notice is the way that black educational achievement is depressed in areas of high racial inequality, above and beyond the effects of higher rates of absolute poverty (Figure 30.1). Greater racial inequality at the county level strongly depresses black student achievement, but not white student achievement. In counties where racial inequality in the local labor market is low, in the left portion of Figure 30.1, there are only small achievement differences between blacks and whites, compared to highly unequal counties where racial achievement differences are three times as large, in the right side of Figure 30.1. Not only the absolute level of poverty, but also the degree of racial inequality in an area, affects the racial gap by depressing the educational achievement of black students. Local racial inequality explains nearly half of the racial gap in achievement (Roscigno, 1999, p. 180). Longer-term exposure to the most disadvantaged neighborhoods is related to lower high school graduation rates (Wodtke, Harding, & Elwert, 2011).

Figure 30.1 As Racial Inequality in the County Increases, So Does the Achievement Gap Between White and Black Children



Note: From "The Black-White Achievement Gap, Family-School Links, and the Importance of Place," by V. J. Roscigno, 1999, Sociological Inquiry, 69(2), p. 179. Reprinted with permission.

Three recent changes negatively affect racial/ethnic achievement differences. First, the wealth gap between whites and blacks has widened dramatically (McKernan, Ratcliffe, Steuerle, & Zhang, 2013); second, "the rich-poor gap in test scores is about 40 percent larger now than it was 30 years ago" because of gains among the rich (Reardon, 2013); and third, blacks are more likely than whites to live in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty than in the past (Sharkey, 2013). This means that the structural situation of minority poor children is worse than it was in the past. How do these changes affect differences in educational achievement? Richer families are investing more in preparing their children for educational success through early childhood enrichment (even tutoring), hiring highly educated nannies, limiting TV time, and exposing their children to libraries, museums, and reading. "From 1972 to 2006 high-income families increased the amount they spent on enrichment activities for their children by 150 percent, while the spending of low-income families on enrichment grew by 57 percent" (Murnane & Duncan, 2011, p. 11). College-educated mothers and fathers are spending twice as much time with their children compared to less educated parents since 1975. The soaring investment in early childhood enrichment among the rich has been called "the rug rat race" by Ramey and Ramey (2010), which they suggest is related to increased competition for admission to selective colleges. At the same time, Head Start and other early education programs for the poor have been cut. The fact that such rapid educational gains have been made among the wealthiest members of society in recent years underscores the importance of environmental and educational enrichment for school achievement rather than genetic factors. Children of color and white children also differ in their rates of attending private schools, socioeconomically advantaged schools, and smaller schools, as well as being in small classes.

Whites are considerably more likely than blacks to attend private school, and attending private school is

related to higher chances of taking an academic curriculum, being in smaller schools, and having student bodies with higher socioeconomic status, greater discipline, and higher rates of attending college (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). Public school students are much more likely to drop out of high school than are Catholic or other private school students (24%, 12%, and 13%, respectively) (Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982). Moreover, the strong academic curriculum and homework required in many private schools is important for student achievement (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987).

In public schools, blacks are more likely than whites to attend schools with larger numbers of low-income students and schools with more racial minorities. Many studies find correlations between the percent minority, or low income, in school and student achievement (e.g., Roscigno, 2000). School segregation, measured by the racial and socioeconomic composition of students in the school attended, varies by race and is related to educational achievement (Berends et al., 2008).

Black students are more likely than whites to attend large urban schools. Both school size and percent minority students in a school are related to the amount of tracking in it (Lucas & Berends, 2002), and blacks and Chicano/as are more likely than whites to attend schools with curricular tracking. Track placement is often related to what is taught, what is learned, test results, and continuing one's schooling (Oakes, 1985; Persell, 1977; Persell, Catsambis, & Cookson, 1992), but not always (Dreeben & Gamoran, 1986; Hallinan, 1987). Other potential contributing factors include the time teachers expect students to spend on homework (Oakes, 1985) and teacher-student interactions (Good, 1987; Oakes, 1985; Persell, 1977).

By 2004, blacks and whites were almost equally likely to be in academic tracks, although not necessarily at the highest levels (Berends et al., 2008). Between 1992 and 2004, blacks were increasingly more likely to attend schools with larger proportions of low-income and minority students, and even less likely to attend private schools compared to whites (Berends et al., 2008).

Schools with more low-income and racial minority students are more likely to have teachers who are not certified or are teaching out of their area of certification (Ingersoll, 2002), as well as teachers with lower achievement-test scores (Coleman, Campbell, Mood, Weinfeld, & York, 1966). Yet, teachers' test scores are related to students' test scores (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Having a series of "high-achieving" teachers vastly increases the achievement of low-income and minority students. But, such students are more likely to get less experienced teachers (Kalogrides, Loeb, & Béteille, 2013). However, if black students attend schools with professional communities of teachers and high degrees of teacher collaboration, there are smaller achievement gaps than in schools without such professional communities (Moller, Mickelson, Stearns, Banerjee, & Bottia, 2013).

Because schools are supported by local property taxes and because there is so much housing segregation by social class and race in the United States, students who live in low-income areas are very likely to attend schools with lower per-pupil expenditures on instructional program. Such disparities in educational opportunities affect how much children learn, how long they stay in school, their graduation rates, and the rates at which they successfully pursue further education after high school.

Student Attitudes and Behaviors

Despite all these structured inequalities in the types of education received by students of color, numerous researchers have found that black students value education as much as if not more than whites (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Blau, 2003; Cook & Ludwig, 1998; Downey, Ainsworth, & Qian, 2009; Mickelson, 1990). Black students also value social goals and personal responsibility for achieving them more than white students do (Blau, 2003, p. 69). Among the differences in behavioral responses, black teens are less likely than whites but more likely than Asian or Latino students to report they have had discipline problems (Blau, 2003, p. 104). Blacks were more likely than whites, Asians, or Latinos, however, to report being unprepared for class and cutting classes (Blau, 2003, p. 104), reports that are consistent with higher rates of absenteeism among blacks in San Francisco high schools (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003, p. 141). Overall, black students report doing fewer hours of homework per night and watching more TV or videos compared to other racial/ethnic groups. A panel analysis of a nationally representative sample of high school students found that extra time spent on math homework increased student test scores, while an extra hour of TV viewing negatively affected scores (Aksoy & Link, 2000).

Some of these behavioral responses have been taken as showing an "oppositional culture" among black or other minority race youths. A much contested cultural explanation, the concept of oppositional culture, emerged from a study of one all-black inner-city high school in Washington, DC (Fordham, 1988, 1993, 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Subsequent researchers have found some (Downey & Ainsworth-Darnell, 2002; Farkas, Lleras, & Maczuga, 2002) or no empirical support (Cook & Ludwig, 1998; Ferguson, 2001; Kao, Tienda, & Schneider, 1996) for the concept. Overall, oppositional culture appears among some students of all races, is not uniform among all blacks, is class-linked, is most relevant for adolescents, and is more likely in schools where the race of students in each track does not reflect the racial composition of the school (Downey & Ainsworth-Darnell, 2002; Farkas et al., 2002; Horvat & O'Connor, 2006; Tyson, 2006).

We need to consider how racial inequalities in school practices may affect student responses including effort and achievement. Early academic performance and evaluations affect students' self-perceptions, and "these perceptions subsequently influence the decisions students make with respect to effort expended on schoolwork, course choices, and post high school plans, as well as how attached they feel to school" (Tyson, Darity, & Castellino, 2005, p. 16). The high value black students place on school and education may help to explain why doing poorly may be even more demoralizing for them than for whites and, thus, even more consequential for their subsequent behavior (such as school disengagement). It may also be one reason why school characteristics have more impact on achievement of blacks compared to that of whites.

Educational Payoffs

Some students of color do complete higher education, despite the pitfalls of racial/ethnic inequalities in their neighborhoods, families, and schools. Do they receive the same "payoffs" from their educations as whites? Asian Americans have high levels of educational achievement. Do they earn the same as whites with similar education? The answer is yes, but only if they received that education in the United States, not if their degree is from another country (Zeng & Xie, 2004). Among blacks who attended selective colleges, Bowen and Bok (1998) found that, even among the most highly educated males, racial differences in income remained—although no earnings differences existed among women.

Education does not afford members of all racial groups the same payoff in housing choices or treatment by the police, the legal system, merchants, or restaurants, suggesting that educational achievement and attainment do not have the same "payoff" for blacks and whites in material, symbolic, or social terms. Such unequal effects might corrode trust and educational effort among some members of the next generation.

Conclusions

Racial differences in educational achievement—which some have tried to explain by genes or culture—are better understood by being rooted in historical and current systems of racial/ethnic inequality, which, in turn, affect the socializing contexts of neighborhoods, families, and schools, as well as individual responses and rewards. When social class and/or racial/ethnic differences are large, enduring, and institutionalized, they are consequential for the next generation and beyond, and they affect educational experiences and outcomes in some of the ways we have delineated here. Without understanding the larger social constellations in which race/ethnicity and education are embedded, we can never challenge and change them.

Notes

1. While mostly the word *black* is used in this chapter, it is used interchangeably with *African-American* (see Tatum, 1999).

2. According to Moss and Tilly (2003) and Pager and Quillian (2005), among others.

3. Fryer and Levitt (2004); Yeung and Conley (2006); Yeung and Pfeiffer (2006).

4. See Persell and Hendrie (2005) for more details.

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READING 31

"Rednecks," "Rutters," and 'Rithmetic

Social Class, Masculinity, and Schooling in a Rural Context

Edward W. Morris

This reading by Edward W. Morris examines interactions in a white, poor, rural high school in Ohio. In ethnographic research (see Chapter 2) questions often emerge after you enter the field, as was the case for Morris. He found that girls did better in high school than boys and explains why this may be so based on one and a half years of observations in this school. He observed classrooms and after-school activities, conducted interviews with students, and collected school records and other documents such as newspapers. He argues that the definition of masculinity is a very strong factor in explaining boys' performance in school and that boys' definition of masculinity is very closely linked to the characteristics of the community in which they reside. One conclusion from this research is that we cannot examine race, gender, or social class separately from the social context—in this case a rural context—if we are to understand students' behaviors in school.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Look up the definition for hegemonic masculinity, or ask your professor. How does this concept fit the argument Morris is making in this reading?
2. What are the positive consequences of adhering to the above definition of masculinity for these young boys? What are the negative consequences?
3. How does social context, such as urban, suburban, or rural, impact educational outcomes? Use other readings from this book to help develop your answer.

I first entered Clayton High School[1] with the intention of studying school disconnection in a rural area. The school was located in a rural community once dominated by a booming coal industry, but now largely impoverished. Although it was not the original focus of my research, I soon discovered that girls outperformed boys academically and showed more interest in school … In this article I analyze this gender difference in academic perceptions and outcomes. My analysis illuminates contradictions of constructions of masculinity and demonstrates how social class and gender are intimately interwoven. My analysis also shines new light on the much-discussed academic "gender gap" favoring girls in disadvantaged contexts, suggesting that particular constructions of social class and gender are critical in producing these academic differences.

From "'Rednecks,' 'Rutters,' and 'Rithmetic: Social Class, Masculinity, and Schooling in a Rural Context," by E. W. Morris, *Gender & Society*, 22(6), pp. 728–751. Copyright 2008 by SAGE Publications. Reprinted with permission.

My analysis builds on the established tenet that men tend to seek historically specific outlets for asserting dominance over women and other men. But my analysis will also clarify and expand new directions in the

theory. First, by focusing on a rural area that has undergone economic restructuring, the study will emphasize the interrelationship of global, regional, and local levels in contextual conditions and practices of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). I will show, for example, how particular local history and concepts, broader regional categories such as "redneck," and global forces such as deindustrialization all shaped the enactment of masculinity among boys in this school. However, my analysis will stay primarily local and will, through the use of observational and interview data, emphasize individual action in the face of larger structural forces (see also Messerschmidt, 2004). This framework accounts for differences in local definitions of hegemonic masculinity, as well as different patterns of action based on interpretations of these definitions. Second, I will highlight a more intricate relationship between class and masculinity than many previous studies. My analysis does not just explain how pre-established factors such as class or race shape masculinity into subordinated or marginalized forms. Instead, it will demonstrate how social class and masculinity are constructed simultaneously (along with sexuality and whiteness), and how strategies of masculine dominance may actually reproduce class disadvantage. Finally, I will add to literature on hegemonic masculinity and latent costs for men. While past research has examined this phenomenon in areas such as crime (Messerschmidt, 1997) and sport (Messner, 1992), I focus here on education, which I discuss more below.

Masculinity and Schooling

Hegemonic masculinity reveals the ironies of the quest of many men to position themselves as different from and superior to women. Some of the more interesting views of the complications of masculinity have been shown in classic ethnographic studies in education. Although neither invoked hegemonic masculinity, Willis (1977) and MacLeod (1995) both demonstrated how for working-class boys "being a man" meant resisting school, engaging in risky, physically challenging behaviors such as fighting or drug use, and embracing manual or illegal labor. Such constructions of masculinity promoted opposition to school and other institutions. This only calcified the boys' working-class position, hindering their chances for upward mobility and greater social and economic power.

I examine whether similar processes might apply to constructions of masculinity among white working-class rural students, and what this can tell us about gendered differences in educational outcomes among disadvantaged youth in general. In contrast to Willis (1977) and MacLeod (1995), my analysis reveals how masculinity is not just an ancillary factor in the deeper dynamic of class reproduction. Instead, I position particular constructions of masculinity through social class as critical to this reproduction. I show how factors contributing to academic disconnection were seen as important resources for the expression of local hegemonic masculinity.

Findings

Differences in Academic Achievement and Career Goals

Based on an analysis of school records, I found that girls overall outperformed boys academically and had greater ambitions for higher education. I obtained a listing from a guidance counselor of student grade point averages and class ranking at the beginning of the school year in 2006. Girls dominated the peaks of these rankings. For example, the top student in each grade level was a girl. In the senior class, eight of the top 10 were girls. Of the top 20 in the senior class, just five were boys. In the sophomore class, where I concentrated my observations, the top five students (with perfect 4.0 grade point averages) were girls. Nine of the top 10 and 17 of the top 20 in the sophomore rankings were girls. By contrast, many students with low grade point averages and those who were required to repeat a grade or repeat certain classes were boys. Of the 23 students who repeated ninth grade in 2006, 15 (65 percent) were boys. However, I should note that some girls were also low-performing. Of the eight students repeating tenth grade in 2006, for example, four were girls. And some girls appeared near the bottom of the class rankings in each grade. Overall, however, girls clearly performed better than boys.[2]

These differences in class rank corresponded to different ambitions for higher education. I obtained surveys regarding plans after graduation that a guidance counselor had distributed to the outgoing seniors in 2006. Of the students who reported that they had no plans for any sort of college, 84 percent were boys and 16 percent were girls. Of those reporting that they planned to attend four-year colleges, 33 percent were boys and 67 percent were girls. Many young men reported an interest in manual, blue-collar jobs typically done by men and requiring no college, such as auto mechanics, construction, and loading trucks. And some young men simply reported “no plans” or “nothing” after graduation. What caused such stark differences in career plans and academic achievement? Several themes appeared in my data.

Too Cool for School: Masculinity and Academic Nonchalance

Rather than gender having a specific effect on the educational behaviors of girls and boys, educational behavior itself became a vehicle for the construction of gender. The performance of gender in this setting employed educationally relevant behavior to accomplish masculine and feminine identities (Butler, 1999; Messerschmidt, 2000, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987), and this shaped academic performance. For example, in my observations girls tended to direct considerable effort and attention to school. Boys, by contrast, took pride in their *lack* of academic effort. No boy I interviewed reported that he studied outside of school. Indeed, if boys achieved well academically, they had to do so without any overt sign of effort or planning. For instance, a boy named Preston was described by several teachers and students as the “smartest kid in the school.” Yet Preston only had a 3.15 grade point average… .

Preston reveals the ultimate goal of schoolwork for many boys at Clayton—to just “get by.” My observations in classrooms mirrored what Preston described: Boys were more likely to sleep, less likely to turn in homework, and less likely to take notes.

Despite this, teachers and students frequently described boys as "smart." A science teacher named Mr. Deering told me, "I think the girls are more conscientious. They will work more, do more of what you ask them," [and] he then pointed to two boys in the class and said, "[T]hey're smart, but they don't do a whole lot." Similarly, girls at the school appeared to see boys as smart, while viewing their own abilities as more limited (see also AAUW, 1992; Luttrell, 1997). These gendered academic behaviors and perceptions emerged from a discourse that framed masculinity as something that should not include academic effort. Boys were understood by themselves and others as smart enough to "get by," but not expected to attend diligently to academic work. These actions were seen as representations of masculinity… .

Masculinity, Sexuality, and School Engagement

Perceptions of masculinity and educational engagement tended to show an interconnection between gender and sexuality. Similar to Pascoe (2007), I found that students at Clayton used terms charged with connotations of sexuality to police the boundaries of masculinity. For example, boys (and to a lesser extent, girls) used the term "pussy," "gay," or "fag" to refer to boys whom they perceived as unmasculine (Eder, Evans, & Parker, 1995; Pascoe, 2007). While important in the everyday construction of gender, this discourse on feminized, lower-status masculinity also occurred through academics. Academically oriented behavior itself could be seen as not masculine. For example, boys perceived as "nerdy"—often those who put more effort into school and were involved in school activities such as band—were more likely to be called "gay" or "pussies." …

Masculinity and Perceptions of Academic Knowledge and Skills: "Booksmarts"

As the student career surveys demonstrated, many boys at Clayton valued manual labor. Gendered and classed views of work and education also emerged throughout my student interviews. One definitive gender difference concerned perceptions of "booksmarts." Virtually all the girls I interviewed responded that they thought "booksmarts"—the knowledge and competencies gained from books—were important to be successful. Few boys thought that booksmarts were as important. Instead, boys were more likely to value "common sense" and "working with your hands." …

To boys such as Robert, acquiring "book knowledge" required boring, inert activities such as reading or "listening to someone talk the whole time." In contrast, Robert and other boys perceived nonacademic, blue-collar work such as woodworking or construction as more active and enjoyable. In this way, these boys forged working-class identities. But such work was also perceived as more manly, as many boys referenced their fathers or other men in their family who did such work, and they praised the utility and vigor of manual labor. Thus, the boys simultaneously forged masculine identities.

In doing so, some boys disparaged academic work and "office jobs." … [A]cademic work was not seen as "hard work" and masculinity in this community had historically been defined through hard physical labor. Although the boys I interviewed tended to admit that "office jobs" could be lucrative, most did not see such careers as useful or gratifying. Much of this perception, however, stems from the local feminization of such work and the lower status placed on femininity in general. Academics and professions requiring "booksmarts" were feminized and considered lower status, while physical labor aligned with masculinity. This relationship undergirded local hegemonic masculinity, even though economic restructuring reduced manual labor jobs. As I show below, local views of masculine dominance in heterosexual relationships and work roles influenced such perceptions.

Gender, Work, and Power in the Community

Teachers at Clayton noted the irony of girls' high academic performance because they perceived the

community (and most teachers lived in the community) as traditional and patriarchal… .

These patriarchal views emerged in my student interviews. Boys and girls perceived family roles differently. Boys tended to see the man as the primary leader and provider within the family (all of the girls I interviewed thought it should be equal). A boy named Zack expressed this in an interview:

> *Do you think the man should be the main provider for the family?* Oh yeah! I think it's just kinda stupid how girls have to go to work. It happens a lot around here. You have it so the girls have to go to work. I don't like that. *Ok, so you think it's kind of a problem that that has to happen?* Yeah. *And that happens a lot around here?* Happens quite a bit. Most of the time it happens around here, it's not because it has to happen. It's because people—the guys are too lazy. We got a lotta lazy people in our community.

Zack states an interest in the traditional breadwinner role for men, similar to other boys I interviewed. But Zack adds a unique twist compared to other boys—he indicts men in the community as too lazy to fulfill this role properly. Zack was one of the highest-performing boys in his grade, and I suggest that this unique interpretation of local family life provoked him to work hard in school to obtain a good job (which he intended to do through going to college and the military). This example demonstrates the importance of viewing gender as a situated construction influenced by interpretation and agency. Zack's achievement is not an anomaly, rather it results from his interpretation of laziness and inability to support one's family as the true failure of masculinity, and his desire to construct his own (perceived stronger) masculinity through academic success. Many other boys, however, did not appear to see this same connection. They continued to eschew and feminize academics even as they revered a male-as-provider family role.[3] This stemmed from a strong local sense of masculine entitlement nested in industrial labor and familial economic power. Such traditionalism, however, was palpably fading economically. Thus, class-based concepts and practices in the peer culture offered regional and local springboards from which to assert and protect masculinity.

Constructing Masculinity, Class, and Whiteness: "Rednecks" and "Rutters"

Hegemonic practices of masculinity at Clayton focused on a carefree, almost rebellious attitude toward schoolwork, and physical toughness exemplified by manual labor. Both practices of masculinity were reflected, but also given new life, through a popular term and identity at the school: "redneck." The term "redneck" is a well-known popular culture identity that implies being blue-collar, rebellious, and southern (Hartigan, 2003; Shirley, 2003). On a more tacit level, "redneck" also strongly represents masculinity and whiteness. Shirley (2003) finds that "redneck" connotes more of a masculine than a feminine identity. Hartigan (2003) asserts that "redneck" reflects important internal dynamics of whiteness as a racial category. This identity is unabashedly white, but opposed to middle- and upper-class whiteness.

Such dynamics are important to recognize because economic decline in Clayton compromised whiteness as well as masculinity. White men, particularly in lower economic strata, may define themselves in opposition to nonwhites (particularly African Americans) through work and economic stability (Fine & Weis, 1998). When

asked about race, the white boys I interviewed also defined whiteness through this sense of stability. When discussing differences between white and [b]lack people, a boy named Harry said: "[When thinking about white people] I think of people that … have better lives—live in good neighborhoods—stuff like that." Where economic situations are tenuous or declining such as in Clayton, however, this understanding of whiteness can be threatened (Fine & Weis, 1998; Kimmel & Ferber, 2006). The concept of "redneck" can reflect and respond to these tensions by reasserting a white blue-collar identity imbued with rebellious toughness. Such an identity fit well with hegemonic masculinity in Clayton.

For instance, I only heard the term "redneck" used at Clayton in reference to white men or boys. The boys I heard called this were most often in lower-level classes or vocational classes, indicating that the concept was not connected to sophistication and academic interest. Indeed, in popular culture "redneck" represents opposition to these ideals (Jarosz & Lawson, 2002). Similarly, some teachers used the term in a whimsically derogatory way to describe certain boys as blue-collar, uncouth, and brazenly macho. Although the term "redneck" is largely derogatory, many people in this community, especially men, embraced it. For example, several trucks in the area proudly displayed bright red "Redneck" stickers. Preston described the attitude in the following way: "Around here, it's like 'yeah I'm a redneck, what are you gonna do about it?' (laughs)."

As Preston implied, "redneck" at Clayton represented the stereotypically masculine trait of physical toughness. Harry mentioned this when I asked him to describe the school: "It's a rough school. It's ah, (laughs), it's a redneck school!" Uses of the term "redneck" captured a sense of pride embedded in living in this "rough," white working-class, rural location. Through the implication of toughness and opposition to elitist sophistication, this regional category offered a classed and raced template consistent with local hegemonic masculinity. This was an identity that could protect white working-class masculinity, but one that was not academically inclined.

While "redneck" served largely as a positive identity at the school, another class-based identity was not embraced: "rutter." Unlike the broader, regional category of redneck, "rutter" was a distinctively local term. "Rutter" denoted people who were extremely poor, dirty, and lowly, similar to the concept "white trash" (Hartigan, 2003; Wray, 2006). Students used this word as a class-based insult, and while "redneck" affirmed whiteness, "rutter" could impair it. (I analyze this further in a separate work: Morris, 2008.) For boys, using "rutter" as an invective often instigated fights… .

Reclaiming Physically Tough Masculinity: Risk-Taking and Fighting

Several works discuss a "risk-taking" quality in masculinity (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messner, 1992). Ferguson (2000, p. 176) refers to a similar emphasis on "brinkmanship"—challenging rules, authority, and refusing to back down. Like the "redneck" identity, physical brinkmanship at Clayton provided avenues to reassert the power of masculinity.

Similar to Courtenay's (2006) research on injury and risk-taking for men in rural settings, I found that boys in Clayton often took bodily risks and incurred physical injuries. Boys were proud of their "battle scars" and excitedly regaled me with unadulterated stories of their accidents and pain… .

The basic sense of risk-taking and physical bravery underlying such behavior could translate into challenging school rules and authority and the physical expression of power, both of which could hinder academic progress. These qualities can be seen through the example of fighting. There were several "girl fights" at the school, but students and adults tended to associate "real" fighting with masculinity. According to students, the purpose of fighting for boys was less complicated than for girls, and the goals intrinsic to the fight itself. As a girl named Jamie said, "Most of the girls have a purpose to fight, like the other girl makes them mad for a pretty good reason or something. And guys they just—'you wanna fight, yeah, okay' [mimics punching motions]." For many boys fighting itself became the goal; it became an important method of cultivating and displaying masculinity. Fighting provided these boys a crucible that could demonstrate the superiority of masculinity to femininity. As Kevin and Roger stated, even boys perceived to not fight well could be branded as "pussies." This allowed some boys to prove superiority over other boys and over girls—something that they perceived could not be guaranteed through academics.

Some boys, particularly those from poorer backgrounds and those more disconnected from school, emphasized the freedom and closure they found in fighting (see also Ferguson, 2000). Fighting defied middle- to upper-class norms of comportment,[4] and also openly opposed school rules. In the second year of my research, the school enacted a stricter approach to fights, diligently policing the cafeteria (where most school fights occurred) and giving mandatory suspensions to those caught fighting. Several boys derided this "zero tolerance" approach as inhibiting a primary method of conflict resolution and self-expression… .

Fighting conveyed a message of physical superiority consistent with hegemonic notions of masculinity. Perhaps because they felt marginalized in other ways, fighting gave these boys a sense of physical empowerment, freedom, and clarity lacking in other areas of their lives. But this entailed academic and bodily costs. Fighting not only led to suspensions, but negative judgments from teachers and school administrators that obstructed boys' attachment to school, and ultimately their achievement. Fighting was certainly detrimental to academic success, but resoundingly consistent with the physical toughness and power associated with local hegemonic masculinity.

Conclusion

This article develops a new view of the academic "gender gap," especially as it applies to disadvantaged students. I argue that gender should not be seen as a static cause of academic differences, but that academically relevant behavior is employed in the construction of gender. Despite the actual and potential inequalities faced by boys at Clayton and other disadvantaged contexts, I argue against a "boys as disadvantaged" perspective. I do this through applying and expanding the theory of hegemonic masculinity in relation to social class and education.

This research shows that definitions of hegemonic masculinity differ according to locale, and these differences might engender unique patterns of action and consequences. At Clayton, pursuing locally hegemonic practices of masculinity tended to hinder boys in school. Fighting as a display of physical masculine dominance, or viewing academic work and striving as feminized and lower status, are examples. Such perceptions and behaviors operated within local, as well as regional and global, patterns of masculinity and social class. Local history meant that hegemonic masculinity in this context stemmed (partly) from maintaining a "breadwinner" role within the family through physically demanding labor. But global dynamics of economic restructuring meant that such practices were difficult for men in Clayton to enact. Thus, I suggest that broader regional concepts such as the tough, rebellious "redneck," or displays of physical dominance such as fighting, were employed by these boys as alternative means to forge and prove hegemonic masculinity.

The findings further demonstrate how class is produced through masculinity and how masculinity is produced through social class (and in a less elaborated way, how whiteness and sexuality are enmeshed in this process). Class privilege and gender privilege can be considered two separate, but interconnected systems of hegemony, further complicated by different (local, regional, and global) levels of practice. Local hegemonic masculinity entailed a sense of superiority tied to physical labor and displays of physical activity, risk, and power—not academics. While perceived to be advantageous locally, this masculinity was a disadvantage within the larger class structure, primarily because globalization has reduced opportunities for industrial labor in many pockets of the United States. This constraining class structure further compromised white working-class masculinity in Clayton, fueling a need to prove masculinity, along with class and race identities, in other ways. Some boys such as Zack crafted practices to accomplish this academically, but most saw academic behavior as inconsistent with local definitions of masculinity. Thus, interwoven processes of class and masculinity led to unexpected outcomes—specifically girls' academic advantage. Far from showing that girls have gender privilege, this outcome actually stems from boys seeking masculine privilege, but under a definition of masculinity that tended to hinder them academically.[5]

Notes

1. All personal and place names are pseudonyms.

2. The only other achievement data I had access to were the Ohio Graduation Test results. Students in the state of Ohio are required to pass this curriculum-based achievement test before graduating from high school. There was no large difference in results by gender on this test, but it is difficult to use this as a gauge of performance because the results are reported as passing rates, not actual scores.

3. There were alternative enactments of masculinity at Clayton that demonstrated less traditional notions of gender, along with higher academic performance. The few boys already mentioned as "band kids" engaged in such practices, which again underscores the variability of masculinity. This constitutes an important area of further analysis; however, in this article I focus on hegemonic practices of masculinity to explain the academic "gender gap."

4. Fighting in school is related to family income. As income rises, it is less likely that a student will be involved in a physical fight in school. Perceptions of fighting among men also vary by class. Pyke (1996, p. 532) argues that higher-class men use the violence they associate with lower-class men as an example of brutality that "reemphasize[s] their superiority over lower-class men."

5. I am not arguing that these boys are responsible for their own disadvantage, but that local hegemonic masculinity promised a degree of relational power over women and other men. This local dynamic must be considered within larger relations of class and gender in which these boys face significant inequalities.

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READING 32

Gender and Education

Roslyn Arlin Mickelson

In 1989, Roslyn Arlin Mickelson published an article titled "Why Does Jane Read and Write So Well?" She revisits those premises in this reading, asking why women's achievement is an anomaly—being particularly successful in school but not being able to parlay their successes into occupational and financial returns. She also examines the recent concern about underachievement of boys. Mickelson addresses these questions using several different explanations and applies test score data to examine these theories.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why does the article indicate that "Jane reads and writes so well," and what are the concerns about her doing so?
2. How does the performance of girls in school compare to that of boys? What changes have occurred recently?
3. How are Mickelson's explanations for boys in schools similar to or different from those given by Morris in his reading in this chapter?

Contemporary gender trends in educational outcomes reveal recognizable patterns. Familiar gender differences can be summarized as follows: Women, on average, do better in school and attain more education than do men with similar racial and socioeconomic backgrounds; men's achievement and attainment patterns are somewhat bimodal in that men are more likely than women to be both academic stars and school failures; and women are slightly less likely than men to excel in mathematics, science, and technical fields, while men are slightly less likely to shine in reading, writing, social sciences, and humanities. Post–high school careers, college majors, and professional degrees reflect these similar gender patterns in choices of college majors.

Since the middle of the 20th century, the historic male advantages in access to schooling and educational outcomes have largely disappeared. Women's educational achievements have closed many of the gender gaps favoring men, and in some cases, new ones favoring women have emerged. To be sure, there are important social class and ethnic variations in gender differences. Nevertheless, overall, female students in the United States achieve at higher levels soon after they begin school and attain more education than their male counterparts at almost every degree level. However, at all education levels, men receive larger occupational and income returns to their education.

This reading begins with a more detailed description of gender differences in educational processes, outcomes, and returns to schooling from the opportunity structure. Gender differences suggest two dilemmas: The first dilemma involves why women do so well in school. In the face of continuing male income and occupational advantages in various returns for similar educational credentials, women's educational achievements and attainments appear anomalous. The second one concerns the underperformance of male students, especially males from disadvantaged ethnic minority backgrounds.

K–12 Educational Processes and Outcomes

The years between children's birth and entry into kindergarten are critically important for readying them for school. There are very few gender differences in young children's access to preprimary school. Nonetheless, by kindergarten, females have a slight advantage in word recognition. By fourth grade males begin to perform slightly better in mathematics (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). These early, small gender differences in academic performance foreshadow the achievement patterns that continue through high school and postsecondary education.

Tracking and Grouping

Ability grouping within elementary school classrooms and tracking of academic courses in secondary school are two of the most common organizational features of U.S. public education that shape educational outcomes. A student's gender alone rarely has a large effect on ability group or track placement, but elementary school placements in special education and gifted programs often reflect an intersection of students' gender, social class, and racial background. For example, although a majority of students are not identified for any special programs during elementary school, middle-class and white students are more likely to be identified as academically gifted, while ethnic minority and working-class students are more likely to be identified for special education. Disadvantaged minority males (especially African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans) are disproportionately placed in special education classes for learning, behavioral, or emotionally disabled students while white, middle-class females are disproportionately identified for gifted education programs (Oakes, 2005). These placements are consequential because elementary school ability groupings launch students onto educational trajectories that influence outcomes from elementary through postsecondary education (Lucas, 1999; Oakes, 2005).

Academic Performance K–12

A key reason that tracking and ability grouping are important is because they influence students' exposure to the formal curriculum. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is widely recognized as a measure of how well students learned the formal curriculum. NAEP assesses student academic performance in a given school at Grades 4, 8, and 12 in a variety of subjects. NAEP results since 2000 show gender gaps exist in reading, writing, and mathematics. Overall, at each grade level, females outperform males in reading and writing (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Males slightly outperform females in mathematics; however, when 12th-grade NAEP performance is broken down into subject areas, males' performance exceeds females' in only two of four mathematics content areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, p. 16). Males outperform females in science during the early grades, but by 12th grade, their advantage disappears. Overall, the gender gaps in math and science have narrowed since the 1970s, but the ones in reading and math persist.

SAT

College entrance exams such as the SAT are highly influential. The majority of SAT takers are females (53.5%), but overall scores reflect a gender gap in favor of males (1474 compared to 1494) (College Board, 2016). It is worth noting that gender differences in SAT scores are dwarfed by ethnic differences in them, with Asians and whites scoring higher than other racial and ethnic groups. Males' SAT math scores exceed those of females by 30 points. On average, males' scores in critical reading fall slightly above those of females (2 points), which is the opposite of the pattern found in NAEP scores where females do better than males in reading. Women's SAT writing scores exceed those of men by 12 points. The population of students who take the SAT includes those planning to attend college whereas NAEP tests reflect the overall population of students. This may be one reason that SAT scores do not reflect gender patterns found in NAEP results.

High School Curricula

Students cannot learn what they have not been taught. Pallas and Alexander (1983) demonstrated that 30 years ago a major factor in SAT score gaps was students' differential enrollment rates in key high-level courses; students enrolling in higher-level courses in math and science generally score better on their college entrance exams. Analyses of high school transcripts reveal that large proportions of male and female students enroll in geometry, algebra II, chemistry, and biology (Institute of Education Sciences, 2007). In fact, compared to the gender gaps of the 1970s, contemporary enrollment gaps in these courses are relatively small.

Today, there are few official systematic gender differences in curricular offerings for public school students. That was not always the case. Until the early 20th century, female students were unlikely to enroll in certain courses because of pervasive gender stereotypes about the proper kinds of knowledge for males and females. Curricula in coed schools varied but always reflected the local community's social construction of gender, especially the gendered nature of men's and women's public and private roles. Historically, some secondary science electives offered gendered curricula. For example, in a physics course for girls, students learned about the mechanics of vacuum cleaners and sewing machines (Tyack & Hansot, 1990). Observable gender differences in math and science enrollments that grew out of the ways that schools organized access to the curricula resulted in females taking far fewer advanced math and science courses than males. Tyack and Hansot (1990) conclude that this historical gendering of the science curricula contributed to few if any females being prepared for college science or engineering courses during the early decades of the 20th century.

At present there are no gender differences in the likelihood of students' placements in higher-level math and science secondary tracks once their prior achievement, previous track placements, race, and socioeconomic status are taken into account. Research identifies persistent race and social class effects in track placements, though. Ethnic differences in higher-level course enrollments are related to many factors, including the fact that disadvantaged minority students, especially males, were disproportionately placed in special education during elementary school. By high school, fewer disadvantaged minority males than females are prepared to enroll in top-level academic courses.

Advanced Placement Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) courses offer the most rigorous, college-level coverage of subject matter. Compared to other high-track courses, AP courses provide students with several advantages including exposure to college-level course work. If they pass the AP exam, students may receive college course credit. To pass the AP exam, students must score a 3 or 4 on the exam (depending on the institution in which they enroll). Males are more likely than female students to score a 3 or higher (61% compared to 54%) on biology, calculus A/B, U.S. history, chemistry, English literature, and composition (Ross et al., 2012).

Females are the majority of exam takers in social studies, English, and foreign languages; males were the majority of exam takers in calculus, computer science, and sciences. Nevertheless, compared to males, females fare relatively poorly in most AP exam subjects. Males' average AP scores in calculus, computer science, English, sciences, and social studies exceeded those of females. Females' average AP scores exceeded males' average scores only in foreign languages (U.S. Department of Education, 2005, p. 6). In fact, foreign languages is the only subject area in which females' average scores exceeded the threshold of 3.0 necessary for college credit, whereas males' average scores exceeded the 3.0 threshold in all other subject areas. The gendered patterns of achievement favoring male students in AP exam results are more similar to SAT scores than to NAEP gender patterns. It is important to remember that the college-bound population of students taking AP or SAT exams is not the same as the general population that takes NAEP tests.

Extracurricular and Cocurricular Activities

For most students, high school is much more than academic courses. Extracurricular and cocurricular activities are important components of students' social lives as well as key contributors to their cognitive development, especially activities considered as cocurricular. Sociological research indicates that positive school outcomes are correlated with participation in extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

There are clear gender differences in the degree and type of participation in extracurricular activities. Females are more likely than males to participate in extracurricular and cocurricular activities, a fact that may be related to their overall higher academic performance. With the exception of student government, where participation rates are comparable among males and females, other activities are clearly gendered. Athletics are the only activity in which more males (45%) than females (32%) are involved. Females are much more likely than male students to participate in yearbook, newspaper, music and performing arts, and academic clubs (Freeman, 2004).

Risky Behavior in High School

Students who dislike school or who engage in risky behavior are less likely to succeed academically, and they are more likely to drop out of high school. NAEP data suggest that while most students are not involved in risky behavior, male students are more likely than female peers to have engaged in drug or alcohol use, to have carried a weapon to school, or to have been a participant in or victim of school violence. Childbearing has a negative effect on females' likelihood of completing high school, although young mothers from higher socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely to graduate than young mothers from low-SES backgrounds (Freeman, 2004).

High school graduation is an important indicator of many future life course outcomes. The proportion of public high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma four years after beginning Grade 9 is estimated by the average freshman graduation rate (AFGR). The overall AFGR in 2009 was 75.5%, but the male rate (71.8%) was lower than the rate for females (78.9%). The rates indicate that one-fourth of those who began public high school fail to graduate within four years (Ross et al., 2012), although some of these youths will eventually receive a high school diploma.

Nationally, an estimated 87% of whites, 89% of Asian Americans, 73% of African Americans, and 76% of Latinos graduated from high school in 2014 (NCES 2014). Gender differences in dropout rates exist in all ethnic groups: Among whites, 3% fewer males (92.4%) than females (95.1%) graduate from high school; among African Americans, males (85%) are 3% less likely to graduate than females (88.9%); among Asian American males, the graduation rate of 95.9% comparable to that of females (96%); among American Indian students, males (85%) are 4.9% less likely to graduate than females (80.1%); and among Latinos, males (74.9%) are less likely to graduate than females (78.8%), reflecting a 3.9% female graduation advantage (NCES 2011). Dropout rates are declining for all male ethnic groups, except Latinos for whom rates are holding steady (Freeman, 2004).

Postsecondary Outcomes

Postsecondary Enrollments

Postsecondary education is becoming increasingly important in the information age. In 2015, 40.5% of Americans 18–24 years of age were enrolled in some form of higher education. Although 40 years ago men were the majority of students at all levels of postsecondary education, since 1980, females have been more likely to enroll in college and to graduate than their male peers. In 2015, 38.7% of males in the "18–24 years of age" cohort compared to 43.2% of females were enrolled in postsecondary education (Digest of Educational Statistics 2015).

Currently, there remains a gender imbalance among all youth in this age cohort: 56% of undergraduates and 58% of graduate students are women. The pattern of gender imbalance holds for whites, among whom 38% of males compared to 46% of females aged 18–24 are enrolled in college. Among other racial and ethnic groups the patterns of gender imbalance are similar: among blacks 34% compared to 39%; and for Latinos 33% of males compared to 42% of females are enrolled in postsecondary education (Digest 2012). Gendered patterns of enrollment among American Indian and multiracial students are similar to other groups. The type of colleges (two- or four-year) students attend differs by their race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Although men are still a majority of students in first-professional degree programs (medicine, dentistry, law, optometry, pharmacy, medicine, podiatry, and theology), women have made striking progress in first-professional degree enrollment since the 1970s when only 9% of students were women. In 1970, for instance, women received 5% of law degrees, 8% of medical degrees, and 1% of dentistry degrees (Freeman, 2004). By 2014, the percentages were 46%, 48%, and 46%, respectively (Digest 2014). In some fields, like veterinary medicine and pharmacy, a majority of recent recipients are women (Wright, 2006).

Postsecondary Attainment

Enrollment is the first step to obtaining a higher education. Persistence to graduation is the final and most important step. Males are less likely than females to persist in higher education. Among students who entered postsecondary educational institutions in the 2003–2004 academic year, 49% attained some type of degree by 2009 (this includes certificates as well as AA and BA degrees). Those attending two-year schools were more likely than those attending four-year schools to receive their degrees by 2009. Among full-time four-year degree students who began their college educations in 2003–2004, 51% of blacks, 52% of Latinos, 66% of multiracial individuals, 73% of whites, and 76% of Asians obtained their degrees by 2009 (Ross et al., 2012).

While 56% of undergraduate degrees are awarded to female students, race-by-gender variations in undergraduate degree attainment remain. Among white bachelor's degree recipients, 55% are female; among blacks, 62%; and among Latinos, 57%. There are notable gender differences (about ±10% in degree attainment across all racial groups), but the magnitude of the gender discrepancies is dwarfed by the much larger between-race differences in time to degree among full-time students (Digest 2013).

There are persistent gender differences in college majors. About one-fourth of the bachelor's degrees conferred each year are in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Males continue to be more likely than females to receive a STEM degree. Not unexpectedly, there are race differences in STEM degree attainment, but there is little difference across race in the gender difference in STEM attainment (Ross et al., 2012). Table 32.1 presents data on majors by gender. The table shows that students majoring in engineering, computer and information systems, mathematics, and the physical sciences (with the exception of chemistry where there is gender balance among majors) are disproportionately male; those majoring in biology and life sciences, education, psychology, and health fields are largely females. The humanities other than history (not shown) also tend to have more female than male majors. The only majors that approach gender balance are chemistry (not shown), agriculture and natural resources, the social sciences and history, and accounting.

These patterns both reflect and deviate from earlier trends in academic outcomes. Accounting, social science, mathematics, biology, and history were fields historically dominated by males, but increasingly women are choosing the field as a major. At the same time, the disproportionate enrollment of males in engineering and computer and information systems majors is inconsistent with the minor gender disparities in high school math and science course-taking and academic achievement. The virtual monopoly that men once enjoyed in engineering and computer and information sciences has been broken, but the fields of study are far from gender parity (Bottia, Mickelson, Stearns, & Moller, 2017). The absence of gender parity in fields of study has implications for labor force participation (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2014; Huang, Taddese, & Walter, 2000).

Table 32.1 Percentage of Bachelor's Degrees Granted by Field and Gender (Digest 2014)

	Female	*Male*
Engineering	18.4	81.6
Computer and Information Systems	18	82
Physical Sciences	40	60
Agriculture and Natural Resources	50.8	49.2
Mathematics	43	57
Business Administration	47.4	52.6
Social Sciences and History	49	51
Biology and Life Sciences	58.5	41.5

Accounting	51.3	48.6
Education	79.4	20.6
Psychology	76.7	23.3
Health and Related Services	84.4	16.6

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Educational Statistics 2013: Bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by sex of student and discipline division: 2013–14.

Labor Force Participation

Labor market outcomes for men and women have changed during the past 35 years in ways that reflect many of the trends in education. During the past half-century as the U.S. economy transformed from one based upon manufacturing to one dominated by services, gender roles became less rigid, more women obtained educational credentials, and greater proportions of women entered the paid labor force.

Women today are much more likely to work outside the home across all levels of educational attainment, and the occupational structure is much less sex segregated than it was a generation ago. Nonetheless, at every level of education, women's labor force participation rates are lower than men's. For example, in 2010 among 25- to 64-year-olds with less than a high school diploma, 64% of men compared to 40% of women were employed or looking for work. Labor participation rates for men and women increase as their educational credentials increase. Among those with a high school education, 72% of men compared to 60% of women participated in the labor force; among those with a bachelor of arts degree, 89% of men and 82% of women were employed (Ross et al., 2012).

Income Returns to Educational Credentials

Just as labor force participation rates increase with educational attainment levels, so do earnings. Both females and males enjoy a positive relationship between their educational credentials and income at every level of education; those with more education earn more (Carnevale & Rose, 2011). Still, even with comparable education levels, females continue to earn less than males (Rose, 2014). The 2010 U.S. Census shows that for all year-round full-time workers, overall females earned 69% of what males earned. The gap in the female–male earnings ratio tends to narrow as occupations require greater education. Women in retail sales earn 65.5% of what males in retail sales earn, while women in computer programming earn 88.5% of what males in the same occupation earn (Hegewisch, Williams, & Henderson, 2011). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2010 females in medicine earned 71.1% of the income of male physicians, most likely because they specialize in less lucrative fields such as family medicine as compared to orthopedic surgery, a specialty dominated by males (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

There is a gender gap in income returns at every level of educational attainment. In 2000, women without a high school diploma earned 80% of what men with similar education earned; in 2010, women from all racial groups with a high school diploma earned 83% of what comparably educated men earned; women with bachelor's degrees received 88% of men's income. Notably jobs in STEM fields pay women 86% of what they pay men in comparable jobs (Ross et al., 2012). This gender gap in pay is found among all racial groups.

Economists and sociologists offer several possible reasons for the education-to-earnings gender gap. Structural explanations include the tendency for women to major in fields that are less lucrative (teaching vs. engineering), sex-composition bias—whereby people who work in female-dominated fields or subspecialties are paid less (Bellas & Reskin, 1994), the likelihood that women will drop in and out of the labor force to have children, and the relatively higher rate of part-time employment among women (Freeman, 2004, p. 98). Sociologists also recognize that sexist norms that devalue women's work may contribute to the income gap.

None of these explanations adequately accounts for gender gaps within occupations. Women's median earnings are lower than men's in nearly all occupations. This is true for the female-dominated, male-dominated, and gender-neutral occupations. Occupations are considered largely sex segregated if they are dominated by men or women. Four of 10 women work in traditionally female occupations while 5 of 10 men work in traditionally male occupations. Typically male-dominated occupations pay more than female ones requiring similar skills and educational credentials. Men even earn more than women in traditionally female jobs like nursing (men's $1,201 per week compared to women's $1,037) and teaching (men's $1,024 per week compared to women's $931) (Hegewisch et al., 2011).

In 2010, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) calculated the weekly earnings for men and women in 111 occupations. In only 4 of 111 did women's median weekly earnings exceed those of men employed in the same occupation (Hegewisch et al., 2011). Although the actual size of the gender wage gap has fallen since 2000, of 534 occupations listed by the BLS, women earn more than men in only 7 of them. Together these 7 occupations account for 3% of full-time working women in the labor force. Thus, the remaining 97% of full-

time working women earn less than their male counterparts for the same job (Glynn & Wu, 2013).

The Female Question: Why Do Females Do So Well in School?

Exploring the structural reasons women earn less for their educational credentials is useful for understanding income differences by gender, but it does not help to account for *why* women continue to achieve so well and attain so much education in the face of the education-to-earnings gender gap. Given that American society is purportedly a meritocracy that rewards those who accomplish more, the academic success of women relative to men in the face of such income disparities seems anomalous.

Mickelson (1989, 2003) proposed several hypotheses to account for the apparent anomaly of women's educational accomplishments. The various hypotheses draw from social scientific theories of human behavior that build upon the intersection between structural forces and individual components of achievement motivation.

The first one challenges the notion that discrimination in the labor force still exists. The Pollyanna hypothesis proposes that today women believe men and women will be rewarded equally by the opportunity structure based on their merit, not gender. For the young women who believe discrimination in labor force returns to women's education is a thing of the past, doing well in school is the rational course of action. Under this scenario, the achievement by women is not anomalous because they expect to be equally rewarded for their efforts and accomplishments.

Even the young women who accept that gender discrimination still exists in the occupational structure do well in school. The differential reference group hypothesis proposes that they gauge fairness of rewards to education by comparisons among women with different levels of education, not necessarily between men and women with the same education. Even within the sex-segregated occupational structure, women with more education work in more lucrative, higher-status occupations than women with less education; therefore, women's growing educational accomplishments make perfect sense. In her memoir, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor explained her decision to join the New York district attorney's office after graduating from Yale Law School instead of taking a lucrative position with a private law firm:

> [M]y starting salary would still be more than what my mother ever made as a nurse, which to Titi Aurora, who worked as a seamstress, had always seemed lavish. (Sotomayor, 2013, p. 194)

Third, the social-powerlessness perspective rests on the premise that young women are keenly aware that the sex-segregated occupational structure and lower wages paid to women mean their educational efforts will not necessarily be rewarded from the labor market based on merit. The social-powerlessness hypothesis proposes that well-educated young women expect to obtain returns on their own schooling through their future husbands' occupational successes. Given this reality, they expect academic achievement will reap the greatest rewards from the marriage market, not the labor market. Hence they do well in school because better-educated women make more desirable wives and mothers, and educational achievements will better position them to compete in the marriage market.

The next hypothesis rests on theories of gender-role socialization. According to this view women do well in school because they have been socialized to respond to external validation for their efforts, whereas males are more likely to have an internal orientation. "Good girls" comply with directives from authority figures like parents and teachers because they desire the praise of these significant others. Because their motivation to excel in school is not necessarily linked to external rewards such as occupational prestige or high incomes, the weaker returns to education they receive do not render their achievement anomalous. Educational achievement is not about getting good jobs and high salaries; rather, it is about doing the right thing—what parents expect and teachers or professors assign.

The fifth hypothesis draws upon feminist theory suggesting that there are fluid boundaries between women's public and private spheres. Accordingly, women are more likely than men to evaluate returns to education in terms not only of the income, status, and careers they may lead to, but also in terms of education's potential to enhance the quality of their personal, familial, and community lives. Feminist theory challenges the traditional views that labor market rewards are the primary measure of returns to educational successes. From a young age, women are socialized to approach their lives by weaving public and private roles into a single tapestry. For women, the public (the economy and the polity) and the private (family and community) exist as a continuum, rather than as a dichotomy. Thus, educational accomplishments that are useful to a woman for her roles in her family and community are highly valuable.

Dumais (2002) observed that each of Mickelson's hypotheses for women's school success reflects a different habitus, one of three core components of Bourdieu's (1990) theory of practice (the other two are cultural capital and field). Bourdieu's concept of habitus represent the dispositions that influence a person's actions. The gendered nature of habitus is a consequence of the different possibilities that women and men perceive as available to them. Habitus is developed during childhood as a person grows to understand her or his place in the social structure. A student's habitus expresses perceived aspects of the gendered structure of opportunity that awaits her or him (race and social class are also relevant). Habitus plays a large role in school success because students' decisions to invest in their education, whether or not to study hard, and what college major and career to pursue depend on their expectations of whether people like themselves can and should be academically successful.

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital, habitus, and field operate together to generate social action—in this case school success. The concept of cultural capital refers to objects that require special cultural abilities to appreciate, such as art; educational credentials and the credentialing system; and the capacity to appreciate and understand cultural goods (Dumais, 2002, p. 46). Schools reward students with greater cultural capital. Consequently, those who possess cultural capital excel in school. Middle-class girls are likely to possess more cultural capital than are boys. An important source of middle-class females' cultural capital edge is their greater participation in private music, dance, or art lessons and cocurricular activities, all of which contribute to their stock of cultural capital (Dumais, 2002; Mickelson 1989, 2003).

The research of sociologists like Dumais and Mickelson offers various theories to account for the female portion of the dilemma of gendered patterns in academic achievement, specifically the anomalous

achievement of females in the face of relatively inequitable rewards for their accomplishments. While none of the theories provides a definitive explanation for women's academic successes, each one sheds some light on the ways that social structure and individual agency contribute to school outcomes. But do these theories account for male patterns of academic underperformance? We now turn to this question.

The Male Question: Is There a Male Crisis in Education?

The previous sections of this chapter described how, on average, beginning in elementary school males fall behind females on a number of measures of academic achievement. Even taking into account the striking ethnic and social class differences in these outcomes, overall, males demonstrate lower verbal skills and are more likely to be identified for special education, to engage in more risky behaviors, to have lower high school graduation rates, and to attend and graduate from college at lower rates than females.

The gender gaps in primary, secondary, and postsecondary enrollments, performance, and outcomes have gained attention from policy makers, parents, and educators. Adherents to one school of thought consider the gender gaps as indicators that American society is leaving boys behind. Many of the observers who perceive "a boy crisis" believe that the societal focus on females' educational disadvantages (American Association of University Women, 1992; c.f., Sadker & Sadker, 1995) during the past 30 years has resulted in neglect of the genuine problems of male students (Sommers, 2000). Some argue that the presence of so many female teachers in elementary school and behavioral norms that require students to sit still for extended periods of time, in combination with a curriculum that emphasizes reading and verbal skills, create learning environments that are less conducive to boys' early educational successes. Consequently, these critics argue, males fall behind their female counterparts beginning in the early grades, and they are launched on less positive educational trajectories than females with similar backgrounds and cognitive strengths.

Many educators, parents, and scholars find the situation of black male students particularly troubling (Brown, 2011; Holzman, 2012; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Kunjufu, 1985). Ferguson (2000) proposes that widely held negative societal images of black masculinity result in many educators, primarily whites who comprise the majority of the nation's teachers, "seeing" black boys as adults. The responses of educators' who unconsciously share this image of black boys, evident in the disproportionately harsh discipline they dole out to them (Black, 2016), contribute to the early educational failures that later become the high rates of special education placement, low test scores, high rates of dropping out, and consequent low rates of college attendance and graduation among black males. Lopez (2003) makes a similar argument about immigrant Caribbean males' negative educational experiences. She describes the toxic race–gender stigma that accompanies immigrant Caribbean male students to urban schools and educators' harsh responses to the stereotypes of them as "hoodlums."

A second school of thought, while acknowledging the existence of gender gaps in favor of girls, rejects the notion of a boy crisis. Those who hold this view note that when educational outcomes are broken out by social class and ethnicity, a much more nuanced view of the gender and education landscape appears. There is more within-gender variation in educational outcomes by ethnicity and social class than variation in outcomes between the genders. From this perspective, each gender faces unique problems, but the gender gap is dwarfed by race, ethnic, and social class gaps. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein (1988) calls this phenomenon a deceptive distinction, because gaps appear to be about gender when, in fact, they are about something else.

Those who reject the existence of a boy crisis in education point to evidence that contradicts the sweeping

generalization that male students are being left behind. They note that wealthy males do not lag behind females in middle or high school. Poor and inner-city males—primarily blacks, Latinos, and American Indian males—have significantly less educational success than females from their ethnic group (Kimmel, 2006). Throughout K–12 schooling, males tend to perform better than females in math and science, a long-standing pattern according to historians of education (Tyack & Hansot, 1990). On achievement tests, especially the important AP exam and SAT college entrance exams, males still outperform females.

As previously discussed, because males are less likely to matriculate to postsecondary education, there are postsecondary enrollment gaps by gender. And once again, ethnicity and social class complicate the picture. For example, at most elite private institutions including Stanford, Harvard, Princeton, Duke, Yale, and Chicago, there is no gender imbalance in enrollment. At the University of California–Berkeley, the California Institute of Technology, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology the gender balance in enrollment favors males (Kimmel, 2006). College majors continue to reflect social stereotypes of gender roles. As illustrated in Table 33.1, with the exception majors in the biological sciences, mathematics, and chemistry (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2014; Bottia, Mickelson, Stearns, & Moller, 2017), male undergraduates are more likely than females to major in the STEM disciplines that lead to socially influential and economically lucrative careers. Importantly, irrespective of college majors, labor force data indicate that, compared to females, males earn more at all educational levels and all levels of the occupational structure.

Whether or not one considers the relative underachievement of males to be evidence of a crisis, patterns of male underperformance require an explanation. Social conservatives like Sommers (2000) and some educators like Ferguson (2000) argue that the educational system operates in ways that are destructive to boys. For example, the overwhelmingly female elementary teacher force means boys have little access to adult male role models during a critical period in their early development. Some observers argue that schools are organized in ways that devalue or actually work against males' innate strengths. Moreover, they maintain that progressive educators and feminists have ignored boys' educational problems while focusing on girls' needs.

Kimmel (2006) and Lopez (2003) suggest that the nature of some school subjects either work in support of or against certain norms of masculinity. From this perspective, succeeding in the humanities, reading, English, and foreign language requires "feminine" ways of thinking; Kimmel (2006) argues that boys hate English for the same reasons that girls love it—there is no single correct answer to most questions in that discipline. Science, mathematics, and technology, all of which have discrete correct answers, are more in tune with stereotypical masculine norms. Willis (1977) proposed a variation of this argument to explain why British working-class males rejected working hard in school. He found that working-class males defined schoolwork and other forms of intellectual labor as feminine in contrast to physical labor, which they considered to be masculine. These arguments are consistent with the data showing that working-class and low-income males, rather than elite males, are the most likely to underperform in school relative to females of the same social class background (Vervaet, Mickelson, Van Houtte, & Stevens, 2017).

Sociologists also have proposed a more obvious reason that boys do less well in school. Essentially, why should men work so hard? School underperformance can be considered rational behavior given the fact that males at

every level of educational attainment will likely obtain greater occupational and income rewards than females even with less education. Males have less incentive to achieve and attain their full educational potentials considering that in some labor markets male high school graduates earn as much as or more than female college graduates (Rose, 2014).

Conclusion

Without doubt, gender differences in educational processes and outcomes exist. Because gender patterns in academic outcomes are consequential, they require continued attention by educators, parents, and policy makers. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the fact that there are greater within-gender variations by social class and ethnicity than there are differences between the genders. The ways that gender shapes a given student's educational experiences and eventual outcomes are intimately tied to her or his social class and ethnicity and to the larger social structural context in which she or he lives.

The twin dilemmas of female achievement in the face of uncertain rewards and male underachievement are more than flip sides of the same coin. They raise important issues for sociologists trying to understand how the processes involved in the gendered aspects of educational stratification contribute to social stratification more generally.

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Projects for Further Exploration

1. Using an academic database, look up the topics of "race" and/or "gender" and "academic achievement" to see what other research has been done in these areas. How does this compare to the arguments made by Caroline Hodges Persell and Roslyn Arlin Mickelson in this chapter?
2. Find information about enrolling children in kindergarten for a school district near you that has more than 3 elementary schools. Also find results of standardized tests for those schools and compare the two sets of information. Is it more difficult to enroll children into schools with higher academic performance?
3. Using the U.S. Census website, collect information about the poverty level of the school districts you are studying. Are there patterns between socioeconomic classes of districts and the measures of achievement on which you previously collected data?

Chapter 8 Education and Opportunity: Attempts at Equality and Equity in Education

Why is there inequality in the educational system in the United States, and what can we do about it? As suggested by this book's introduction and the readings elsewhere and in Chapter 7, the U.S. educational system is rife with problems of inequality. Many programs to bring about change have been designed to remedy these inequalities. This chapter contains descriptions and analyses of some of these efforts, most of which are still current issues in education today. Although we cannot cover all attempts at equality and equity, we focus on those most salient, both historically and at the present time. In particular, we focus on desegregation, charter schools, and standardized testing. We do not cover general educational reforms in this part of the book but leave the discussion of those efforts to Chapter 11 and other chapters.

In studying broad changes in education of any kind, we notice that the impetus for these changes comes from many different directions, with the most far-reaching changes generated at the federal level, either through judicial decisions or via funding efforts tied to specific initiatives. This should not be surprising, given previous readings about the organization of schools in the United States and the way schools are financed (Semuels, Chapter 3). In fact, loose coupling combined with local financing of schools makes broad-based reform efforts very difficult in the United States, as the readings in this chapter suggest.

School systems across the United States are difficult organizations in which to introduce change, as illustrated by the many stakeholders in the open systems model. One of the most significant pieces of legislation to impact schools was targeted directly at increasing equality in education—*Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1954, the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* ruled that separate but equal education was unconstitutional. This decision set in motion many changes in public school education today and is thought to be responsible for changing the composition of cities and their schools as Whites fled from cities to avoid sending their children to desegregated schools. In 1964, James Coleman was commissioned by the U.S. Congress to assess changes in schools 10 years after this ruling. Coleman found that the 1954 decision had little impact on the segregation of America's schools. Pressure began to mount as school districts were "encouraged" to desegregate. These changes sometimes meant closing all-Black schools and moving those students into formerly all-White schools (Cecelski, 1994). White residents also worked to alter the shape and structure of school districts during this period in an attempt to keep from sending their children to desegregated schools (Rubin, 1972). Residential segregation continues and is a major obstacle to desegregation in U.S. education (Frankenberg, 2013), as illustrated by many of the readings in Chapters 7 and this chapter.

The early 1970s were active times, with courts mandating school desegregation across the country in a climate of outright racial conflict, particularly in the South. Policies of both desegregation and affirmative action have been challenged and overturned in the courts. Focus on both minority status and social class is important because poverty is not distributed evenly across racial and ethnic households, as noted in Chapter 7. Issues of segregation, desegregation, and resegregation are addressed in the first three readings in this chapter. The first

reading, by Gary Orfield, discusses the legal history of school desegregation and the current state of "resegregation" in American schools. The second reading, by Megan M. Holland, describes what happens when minority students are integrated into a majority White high school. She describes the process of integration from the perspective of the students being integrated, which often leads to racial isolation (Fiel, 2013; Ispa-Landa, 2013). The third reading, by Toby L. Parcel, Joshua A. Hendrix, and Andrew J. Taylor, uses their research on one community that had easily desegregated, but after community growth led to resegregation, residents are now resistant to desegregation.

Two more recent attempts by the federal government to achieve equality in education are No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top. These two pieces of legislation, designed to improve schools, focused on increasing educational opportunities and experiences for *all* children. A series of federal reform efforts culminated in 2002 in the NCLB legislation, and in 2010, President Obama introduced his Blueprint for Reform; both of these focus on accountability (standardized testing) and innovation.

One reform effort that is gaining momentum as a result of NCLB and the Blueprint for Reform is the charter school movement. Both pieces of legislation saw charter schools as an opportunity to provide alternative educational opportunities in public school systems and put more pressure on existing schools to improve the educational experiences they provide. As of the writing of this book, President Trump has yet to lay out a clear legislative agenda for schools, but his appointment for secretary of education suggests that there will be continued emphasis on and support for charter schools from the federal government in the United States. Charter schools share many similarities with earlier magnet schools, but charter schools operate outside of most regulation by federal, state, and local authorities. However, as Iris C. Rotberg suggests in this chapter, the research on charter schools is, for the most part, linked to increased segregation of schools. The reading by Linda Darling-Hammond uses her experience and background in researching school reform efforts to consider how charter schools—and all schools—can be more successful in educating children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Meanwhile, more charter schools are developed to serve different purposes, as is the case of the "No Excuses School" described in the reading by Joanne W. Golann in Chapter 10.

Although only briefly discussed in readings in this chapter, magnet schools, the precursors to charter schools, were one way that school districts attempted to desegregate without busing students involuntarily from one school to another. Magnet schools were organized in districts to attract students from different backgrounds around particular subject areas, such as math and science or the arts. Successful magnet schools should have desegregated school districts; however, this was not always the case, as Rotberg suggests in this chapter. In many cases, magnet schools enrolled only White students because those students had the cultural resources to both learn about and qualify for admittance to these specialized schools (see also Lareau, Evans, and Yee in Chapter 7). Another problem was that teachers in magnet schools were trained in the particular area of the magnet, not necessarily in working with children from diverse racial backgrounds, as would be the case in desegregated schools (Metz, 1994).

A little background may be useful to understand the controversy surrounding the idea of parents choosing schools for their children. School choice became a political issue in the 1970s. At that time, Americans were

concerned about desegregation and the quality of education their children were receiving. Choice was seen as a way of improving education without increasing costs while also getting parents more involved in the education of their children. Models of school choice, however, varied considerably; some were statewide, and some only involved a single district while others included private schools. Whereas some people argue that school choice gives lower-class families an opportunity to get their children out of inferior educational settings and send them to better schools, others believe that lower-class parents will not have the "cultural capital" necessary to find their way through the system to the best schools (Saporito & Lareau, 1999; Lareau, Evans, & Yee in Chapter 7) or to broker the best education for their children. Unfortunately, the first criterion for many White parents in making a school choice is the racial composition of the school their children will attend (Johnson, 2006; Saporito & Lareau, 1999). The result of such choices reinforces the resegregation of schools, as described in this chapter.

Attempts to achieve equality and equity in education face an uphill battle. The problems faced by schools are considerable. Setting standards and requiring standardized testing to assure equity in education is another method that has been and is currently part of federal and state initiatives, such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, as noted previously. In a direct response to these high-stakes tests, Judith Browne Dianis, John H. Jackson, and Pedro Noguera, in this chapter, discuss the meaning of these tests and why some parents should opt out of them. Unfortunately, setting standards alone does not make up for inequality in society, and high-stakes standardized testing has different consequences for children from different racial/ethnic and economic groups.

As you read through this chapter, you will soon see that changing schools to make them more equal is clearly political. All of these efforts to achieve equity and equality are very different; none are without controversy, but some are more controversial than others. It could be argued that none have been entirely successful because the condition of education for poor and minority children has not improved significantly. The readings in this chapter point to the problems of achieving equality, especially when doing so can affect the privilege of those who benefit from the unequal conditions.

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READING 33

Lessons Forgotten

Gary Orfield

Gary Orfield is a leading scholar on issues of civil rights and racial segregation in U.S. schools. He is currently codirector of the Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, a center that was originally at Harvard University and renamed when it moved to the University of California at Los Angeles in 2007. In this reading, Orfield describes the history of school desegregation in the United States. In addition to the legislation, critical to the desegregation and subsequent resegregation of American schools, he examines the political climate and factors that influenced the attempts to provide more equal educational opportunities across race. Based on his research on school segregation and desegregation over time, this analysis and his other work suggest little hope that the current state of segregation in American schools will be reduced in the future.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. According to Orfield, how did court cases fall short in ensuring desegregation of American schools?
2. What societal responses to the 1970s legislation made the resegregation of America's schools inevitable?
3. What difference does it make if schools are segregated?

In an era of great hope for this country's racial transformation from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, we committed ourselves to creating integrated schools. There was a brief period in our history in which there was serious policy and research attention on how to devise racially diverse schools to achieve integration and equal opportunity. Civil rights leaders and participants in the hundreds of demonstrations demanding integrated education knew the sorry history of "separate but equal" and fought for access to the opportunities concentrated in White schools.

From "Lessons Forgotten," by G. Orfield, in *Lessons in Integration: Realizing the Promise of Racial Diversity in American Schools* (pp. 1–6), edited by E. Frankenberg and G. Orfield, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. Copyright 2007 by the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia. Reprinted with permission.

The desegregation experience has often been described by critics as little more than a mechanistic transfer of students, but it was often much more than that. From thousands of desegregation plans implemented around the nation we learned about the ways to operate successful integrated schools and classrooms. Now, as we deal both with resegregation, where court orders are dropped, and with the emergence of racial diversity in thousands of other schools, not as the result of court orders, but as the product of a great increase in the non-White population and of diversification of growing sectors of suburbia, that experience and the unfinished agenda of the civil rights era are relevant again. Too many hard-earned lessons have been forgotten.

Most of the public struggle for desegregation involved opening the doors of White schools to students who had been historically excluded—Black and, in some cases, Latino students who attended segregated schools that were commonly inferior on many dimensions.[1] There was a fierce, two-decade struggle after *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* to desegregate the South, followed, in the 1970s, by a brief and usually losing struggle to desegregate northern cities. The Supreme Court's 1974 decision in the metropolitan Detroit case of *Milliken v. Bradley* rejected the only remedy that could have produced substantial and lasting school desegregation in much of the North, and instead built a massive legal barrier between city school districts and the surrounding suburban districts, where most White children resided and where typically the best schools were located. President Richard Nixon, who ran on the "southern strategy" promising to roll back desegregation, had dismantled much of the civil rights machinery of the federal government by this time (Panetta & Gall, 1971).

Critics often describe this period as one of mandatory race mixing with no educational components. Many educational experts, civil rights advocates, and officials, however, understood early that more must be done. Simply letting some minority students into previously White schools operated by the same district officials was not likely to solve the problems of inequality. In fact, these officials often found new ways to discriminate within schools.

The deeper changes, in educational and social terms, involved going from the reality of desegregation—the fact that children of different racial and ethnic groups were now in the same school and faculties had been ordered to be desegregated—toward real integration, which required fair and equal treatment of each racial and ethnic group. Gordon Allport's classic book, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954), published the year of the *Brown* decision, had concluded that creating desegregated settings could produce either positive or negative outcomes, which depended on how desegregation was done. The key, he said, was creating "equal status interaction" between the previously segregated groups. Allport wrote: "It required years of labor and billions of dollars to gain the secret of the atom. It will take a still greater investment to gain the secrets of man's irrational nature. It is easier, someone has said, to smash an atom than a prejudice" (as cited in Clark, 1979).

In the early days of desegregation there were too many reports of segregated classes, removal of minority teachers and principals, failure to integrate school activities, segregated classroom seating, discriminatory counseling, curricula that ignored minority history, and many other conditions that limited or prevented full access for minority students. Additionally, these conditions limited positive diversity experiences for White and minority students. Many educators, advocates, and researchers realized that factors influencing the nature of the transition from segregation to desegregation, and ultimately to integration, could shift the academic and social outcomes of students in these schools (Schofield, 1981). Most school staff members, who themselves attended segregated schools and were trained to work in one-race schools, did not have the knowledge and tools to address these issues.

Desegregation orders and plans by the late 1960s often went far beyond simply transferring students. The Supreme Court ended token desegregation that had been occurring through "freedom of choice" plans in 1968 and ordered "root and branch" desegregation to eliminate "dual school systems" organized on the basis

of race (*Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, 1968). To fulfill the constitutional requirement to create "unitary" school systems that were fully integrated, school desegregation plans had to include desegregation of teachers and students, and equalization of educational opportunities, facilities, and curriculum. The plans usually included strategies for informing the public of the plan, managing crises, retraining teachers and staff, developing new educational materials, and implementing policies for fair discipline and participation in student activities among the various groups of students.

Following the Supreme Court's decision in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971), there was massive controversy over court orders using tools such as busing to more thoroughly desegregate urban schools. Despite disagreements, both critics and supporters of desegregation recognized that help was needed in the suddenly integrated schools in hundreds of cities. Government responded, for a time. The Emergency School Aid Act was a bipartisan law initially intended to smooth the crises caused by sudden desegregation of urban school systems. In this act, negotiated between the Nixon White House and Senate liberals led by Senator Walter Mondale,[2] Congress enacted a policy of giving money to schools to support successful desegregation. Regardless of whether they supported desegregation plans, both sides could agree that if the plans must be implemented, schools required help to prevent dangerous cleavages in communities, such as those that did such severe damage to several cities, including Little Rock, Birmingham, and Boston, after racial violence flared. The programs funded under the desegregation assistance law did not provide money for busing itself, but they did provide hundreds of millions of dollars for helping the schools adapt.

The Emergency School Aid Act (Orfield, 1978, chap. 9) lasted from 1972 until 1981, when the Reagan administration ended it (Orfield & Eaton, 1996). While in operation, the law funded training, intervention programs, new curricula development, magnet schools for voluntary desegregation, and large-scale research or ways to improve race relations. Because courts were actively requiring desegregation, there was interest in obtaining help, and, as a result, school districts eagerly applied for these funds. The funding was so enthusiastically sought, in fact, that districts were often willing to do additional desegregation of students and teachers, not required by their own plan, to get it. Many magnet schools began and spread rapidly under this program, as school choice became a significant element in American education for the first time. The law required that magnets be desegregated—choice was designed to combine equity with educational options.

During the Carter administration, the law was rewritten to incorporate the lessons of the major evaluation studies, which showed that aid made a substantial difference for both achievement and race relations, and was needed for at least several years to facilitate successful change. At the same time, the National Institute of Education supported research on desegregated schools and developed a research agenda for the field. Research on the effects of the programs and changes funded by the desegregation assistance law produced important findings about the conditions under which race relations and educational achievement gains were most likely to occur in interracial schools. During the desegregation era the Black-White gap declined sharply. Major studies documented the benefits of certain classroom techniques in mixed-race classrooms. Teachers and administrators facing racial change were given a great deal of inservice preparation.[3]

During this same period, education schools across the country and their national accreditation agencies made

significant efforts to require training of teachers in multicultural education. Sensing a large new market, publishers supported substantial revisions of texts that had an exclusively White perspective. Many districts commissioned new curriculum about local minority contributions. At the same rime, the spread of bilingual education requirements and funding under the 1968 Bilingual Education Act, as well as the 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision about the rights of non-English-speaking students, brought into the schools an increasing number of Latino teachers and supported beginning education in a child's native language. Several desegregation orders, including those in school districts in Denver, Boston, and Texas, contained specific programs for language-minority students and their teachers.

The need for these efforts did not cease, but the support did. Training, school district programs, and research withered away. The Reagan administration in its first months opposed desegregation orders and eliminated the desegregation assistance program that had made desegregation plans work better; the research operation was shut down, and for the next quarter century there would be no significant federal funding for research or policy on effective race relations in diverse schools (Orfield & Eaton, 1996). The Reagan administration did, however, support research on "White flight," which it used to oppose desegregation in federal courts.

The country turned in a different direction when the standards movement emerged in the aftermath of the Reagan administration's *A Nation at Risk* report in 1983. The basic ideas of standards-based reform were that the social context of schools could be overlooked—both the problems of racial and economic inequality and the positive possibilities of racial diversity—and that standards, requirements, and sanctions would produce more equal outcomes in and of themselves or, if necessary, with the additional pressure of market competition from charter and private schools. Part of the basic analysis of the "excellence" movement was that schools had been diverted from traditional education responsibilities to counterproductive social reform efforts.

Virtually all states adopted this agenda, which was reinforced by the agreement between President George H. W. Bush and the nation's governors in 1989. At the Charlottesville Educational Summit, the National Governors Association's chair, Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas, led the governors to agreement with the president on six national education goals to which the country should aspire by 2000, from school readiness to increasing high school graduation rates. Goal 3 (U.S. students should be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement) and goal 4 (all students should demonstrate achievement in core subjects) in particular spurred the bipartisan standards agenda (National Governors Association, 1989, 2000). The program to achieve the national goals became known as the America 2000 program, but it was not until the Goals 2000: Educate America Act passed in 1993 during Clinton's first presidential term that the six goals were adopted as part of federal education law. In addition, the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (known as the Improving America's Schools Act, or IASA) further drove the standards movement by requiring that all states adopt a system of standards, assessments, and accountability to measure student performance in order to qualify for Title I funding. The IASA also required states to disaggregate student performance data for schools' annual yearly progress by race, gender, and socioeconomic status, but sanctions were not seriously enforced. Ultimately, none of the goals for closing the racial gap were realized and the gaps widened in some dimensions.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), however, imposed more demanding goals and deadlines on all American schools. NCLB had strong goals and sweeping sanctions for equalizing achievement among minority and White children, but had no requirement to equalize the very unequal schooling opportunities or take any action to end segregation of minority students in inferior schools and improve race relations. By insisting on equal outcomes from patently unequal schools highly segregated by race and poverty, the 2001 law's sanctions tended to strongly penalize minority schools and teachers (Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005).

The effects of segregated education cannot be cured by merely enacting strong demands for achievement gains and changing nothing else in schools that are usually unequal in every major dimension relating to student achievement, including the quality of teachers, curriculum offered, and the level of competition (peer group). In fact, enforcing rigid standards without equalizing opportunity can exacerbate the inequalities by stigmatizing minority schools as failures, narrowing their curriculum to endless testing drills, and leading strong, experienced teachers to transfer to less pressured situations. The massive publicity given to test scores may also help destabilize residentially integrated communities, as realtors use test scores to steer White buyers to outlying White communities. Thus, the ironic impact of ignoring the inequality of the segregated schools in the name of standards is to worsen them.

In the past quarter century of incredible demographic transformation of the American school-age population there has been virtually no investment in either determining the best policies for extraordinarily complex school communities or even in applying well-documented programs and policies that are likely to make things better. Federal funding of desegregation research and experiments ended in the early 1980s, and private foundations do not generally support research about these topics, which has drastically limited the development of new knowledge that could assist schools with the racial transformation. This myopia makes school communities less effective internally and much weaker as anchors for multiracial communities dealing with pressures of racial stratification, fear, and racial transformation.

Notes

1. The right for Latinos to desegregate was not acknowledged by the Supreme Court until 1973, after most active desegregation efforts had already ended. In striking contrast to the Johnson administration's role in the South, the Nixon administration did virtually nothing to enforce this policy.

2. Mondale, who became Jimmy Carter's vice president, chaired the Senate select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, which compiled 30 volumes of congressional hearings on all aspects of desegregation and issued a comprehensive report in 1972 that included a chapter on conditions for successful integration (U.S. Senate, 1972, chapter 17).

3. Much of that research is summarized in Hawley, Crain, Rossell, Schofield, & Fernandez (1983).

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READING 34

Only Here for a Day

Social Integration of Minority Students at a Majority White High School

Megan M. Holland

Integrating schools has been a challenge in the United States despite court orders as described by Gary Orfield in the first reading in this chapter. Megan M. Holland describes a program in which city youths, primarily African American and Latino, attend a school in a nearby suburb. She observed at the suburban school for approximately five months with one other researcher and conducted 14 small group interviews with 26 students from the voluntary desegregation program (VDP) and 17 students from the hosting high school. As you read this piece, you will find that gender made a difference in how the VDP students were received in this high school.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What hardships did the VDP students face in participating in the voluntary desegregation program?
2. How did gender influence how well VDP students were received at this high school?
3. What benefits and problems associated with voluntary desegregation programs are apparent from this reading?

When the Supreme Court handed down the *Brown* decision in 1954, the hope was that desegregated schools would lead to increased educational achievement for African American students as well as improved race relations for the country. Since then, hundreds of studies have examined desegregation, particularly its effects on interracial friendship and relations (see Schofield 1991 for a review). However, much of this work has focused on outcomes, with less attention paid to understanding the process of integration within schools. Therefore, we lack a deep knowledge of what the experience of integration is like for students and how the organizational and cultural context of a school affects this, particularly in contemporary desegregation programs.

From "Only Here for the Day: The Social Integration of Minority Students at a Majority White High School," by M. M. Holland, *Sociology of Education*, 85(2), pp. 101–115. Copyright 2012 by the American Sociological Association.

In this article, I use observational and interview data to understand how the context of one school that participates in a desegregation program shapes the integration process for the African American and Latino students who are bussed in, identifying gender differences in their social experiences. I argue that the boys are more socially integrated than the girls due to two interacting processes: (1) At the interpersonal level, suburban white youth value the status characteristics attributed to African American and Latino males, which facilitates integration according to Blau's (1960) theory of social integration, and (2) at the organizational

level, the organizational practices of the school facilitate participation for the boys in extracurricular activities, which lead to interracial contact under ideal conditions (Allport 1954), while blocking the girls from such participation. I argue that these two processes occur simultaneously on different levels of interaction, creating a cycle whereby the school provides opportunities for minority boys to make friends with whites and participate in athletics, which gives them status and positive social experiences, which makes them more likely to make more friends. In contrast, the school provides little opportunity outside of class time for minority girls to interact and make friends with white students, which makes them little known at the school, which leads to negative social experiences, which makes them less likely to make friends. Although I do not make claims as to the exact origins of these processes, I do show how they reinforce each other and result in very different experiences for males and females… .

Literature

Social Integration

Most studies on integrated schools use network or survey data to identify the amount of interracial contact, the interracial friendship choices, or the racial attitudes of students. Consequently, we know a great deal about the patterns of these attitudes and friendships but little about the depth of these friendships, how they play out on a day-to-day basis, or how they affect the perceptions students have of their place in a school. While other studies on diverse or desegregated schools have used qualitative methods, they have tended to focus more on the construction of racial or gender identity within groups (Bettie 2003; Hemmings 1996; Lewis 2003; Tatum 2003) and less on how intergroup dynamics develop and affect students' feelings of integration into the school community.

As I am studying the process of integration at one school, I focus on students' subjective perceptions of the school climate, and I therefore will be looking at the social integration of students rather than friendship patterns or the development of racial or gender identities. Work among social psychologists has focused on understanding both the factors contributing to and the effect of "a sense of belonging" among students, which tends to be conceptualized as feeling a part of and supported by the school community (see Osterman 2000 for a review). This concept is similar to how I define *social integration* in this study, although I also consider how incorporated a student is into the social structure of the school. Therefore, while I conceptualize social integration as feeling a part of, and equally valued and supported in, a school community, I also consider the extent to which a student has social connections outside of his or her racial in-group. In this way, I build on past studies of interracial friendship by analyzing the feelings and understandings of individual students about how they fit into the community as well as their social incorporation or isolation. As such, I use Blau's (1960:546) theory of social integration as it focuses on the individual-level processes that create social bonds within groups and help individuals form a cohesive social structure. He conceptualizes social integration as a process whereby individuals must make themselves attractive to a larger group and at the same time approachable. Higher social status usually makes an individual more attractive; however, in making oneself attractive, one can also be seen as unapproachable. Blau discusses how using a self-deprecating modesty can make one more approachable.

This theory of social integration is useful because it considers two elements often left out of research on desegregated schools—status and process. Studies of friendship patterns tend to neglect the role of status as a multidimensional concept in determining a student's position in the social network. Status, when included, is usually operationalized as academic ability or racial minority status (see Kitsner et al. 1993). Status among youth can be seen as a reflection of parents' socioeconomic status (Gaines 1991; Hollingshead 1950), but many other elements can affect a student's status within his or her peer culture, such as athleticism and participation in extracurricular activities (Adams and Bettis 2003; Coleman 1961; Eder and Kinney 1995; Goto 1997; Kinney 1993) as well as attractiveness, social skills, and personality (Coleman 1961; Kinney 1993).

In considering how cultural conceptions of status may influence perceptions of African American males and females, we can see that they yield some divergent predictions. African American males may have higher social status than females for a number of reasons that are dependent on the school's context. For instance, young African American males are typically stereotyped as athletic, which may help them gain status in schools that value sports, and participating in sports typically brings more status to boys than to girls (Eder and Parker 1987). In addition, minority girls may be less likely to join high-status girls' sports, such as cheerleading, because they are so strongly associated with white girls (Bettis and Adams 2003). Many white suburban males are also increasingly listening to rap and hip-hop music and becoming fascinated with images that this music represents (see Rodriquez 2006). This may allow African American males in a majority white context to gain status. In contrast, African American females do not have the same kinds of cultural signals to trade on for status.

However, African American males also have to contend with stereotypes that paint them as violent and aggressive. Blau's (1960) theory of social integration predicts that an individual will be accepted by his [or her] peers based on both his or her attractiveness to the group and his or her approachability. Studies in the workplace have found that African American females are better able to cross cultural boundaries than males as they are less threatening (Epstein 1973). Considering this, we might then expect African American females to make more cross-race friends due to their approachability.

Therefore, it is unclear how social integration according to Blau (1960) may vary for African American males and females in terms of status valuation and approachability. However, it is important to understand how these gender differences affect social integration as this may influence a student's general social and academic experience as well as his or her experience with students of other races. This experience may affect whether students will choose to segregate or integrate themselves in the future (Braddock 1980; Dawkins and Braddock 1994).

School Organizational Effects on Integration

Previous researchers have usually focused on two ways that the organizational structure of a school can influence race relations and friendship patterns—through the interaction opportunities available and through the conditions under which interaction takes place.

Blau's (1977) macrostructural theory posits that relations can develop only when people have the opportunity to interact. In schools, chances of interaction are largely a function of the classes students are in. Many schools engage in curricular tracking, placing students in different classes according to ability. Tracking plays an important role in students' friendship choices, with students tending to make more friends within their tracks (Hallinan and Williams 1989; Kubitschek and Hallinan 1998; Moody 2001). Furthermore, students placed into ability groups within classrooms in middle school are more likely to make friends within those groups (Hallinan and Sørenson 1985).

Other organizational characteristics of the school and classroom influence the kinds of opportunities students have to interact and form friendships. For instance, separating students by grade level in the lunchroom in

middle and high school, rather than grouping all grades together (Moody 2001), and the type of classroom—open or traditional in elementary and middle school—have been found to influence the development of interracial friendships (Hallinan 1976). Other studies of within-race peer-group segregation have found that school organization influences friendship formation. For example, Levinson (1998), in studying a Mexican secondary school, identified how school practices led students to feel connected to an academically and socioeconomically diverse group, while Flores-Gonzalez (2005) showed how academic tracking and use of school space in an inner-city high school created segregated groups—the "school kids" and the "street kids."

The racial composition of both the school and individual classrooms can also affect students' friendship choices. Macrostructural theory would predict that the more diverse a school is, the more opportunity there is for cross-race interaction and therefore the more likely it is that interracial friendships will form. Some studies confirm this; for example, Quillian and Campbell (2003), in studying cross-race friendship among white, Asian, Latino, and African American high school students, found that friendships between students of different races increased with the diversity of the school. However, Moody (2001) found a "tipping point" of diversity in that once an individual middle or high school became racially balanced (i.e., having a racial heterogeneity score between .30 and .65), the number of interracial friendships decreased. Similarly, Hallinan (1982) found both African American and white elementary school students made the most interracial friendships in majority white classrooms. Other studies in middle schools have found that opportunity for interaction does not necessarily lead to interaction and is not sufficient to lead to friendships, changes in attitudes, or feelings of solidarity (Schofield 1979).

Contact Theory

While macrostructural theory focuses on the structural conditions that influence the opportunity to interact, contact theory specifies the conditions of interaction most likely to lead to positive racial sentiment. Allport (1954) set out specific conditions under which contact is ideal: when individuals are of equal status; they are working toward a common, cooperative goal; and there is institutional support. Multiple studies have followed up on Allport's theory (see Pettigrew and Tropp 2006) and refined and extended it (Pettigrew 1998, 2008).

The school context is important to understand to test Allport's (1954) theory under his conditions (Moody 2001; Schofield 1991). The size, population, and organization of the school are all factors that influence not only the opportunity for contact but also the conditions under which contact takes place (Khmelkov and Hallinan 1999; Moody 2001). Simple opportunity for interaction does not mean that friendships will be made when conditions that are likely to lead to positive interactions are not in place (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Rodkin, Wilson, and Ahn 2007).

Academic tracking influences status differences, which can lead to fewer interracial friendships if students of one race are disproportionately assigned to a lower track (Schofield 1979). In many schools, African Americans are disproportionately placed in lower-ability tracks (Noguera and Wing 2006; Oakes 1985), which can lead to African American and white students' being of unequal academic status. Extracurricular activities fulfill Allport's (1954) first condition of equal status better than academic activities due to the ability tracking that occurs in most schools (Braddock, Dawkins, and Wilson 1995; Khmelkov and Hallinan 1999).

Allport's other criteria, for both groups to be working toward a common, cooperative goal, is also better realized in a setting outside the classroom where students are concerned with the performance or product of the group rather than their own individual grades. Indeed, African American and white students who participate in extracurricular activities together usually have more cross-race friendships than those who do not (Hallinan and Teixeira 1987; Moody 2001; Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991). However, status hierarchies can still develop within teams, which may lead to racial conflict (Greenfield 2002).

Allport's (1954) last condition, that there is support by authorities, is rarely met in most studies of cross-race interaction in schools. It is usually assumed to be true in schools; however, schools can vary widely in their commitment to encouraging interracial friendship. Most past studies, in focusing on large national data sets, have failed to look at this condition. However, Schofield and Sager (1977), in studying one middle school with a high commitment to fostering diversity and integration, found that over time the school's efforts lead to more interracial interaction.

Gender Differences in Integration

Very few of the hundreds of studies on integration in schools have focused on gender differences in friendship patterns, and those that have identified gender differences have not always been able to identify the mechanisms behind them. Studies of gender differences across both races have been somewhat contradictory. Some have found that males of both races are more likely to interact across racial lines (Schofield 1982; Schofield and Sager 1977), while others have found that it is white females who are most likely to do so (Damico and Sparks 1986). Some studies have found that African American females are less likely to have interracial interactions or friendships in comparison to African American males (Damico and Sparks 1986; Eaton 2001; Ispa-Landa 2009; Kitsner et al. 1993), while studies focusing more broadly on crossing social boundaries have tended to find that African American females are more willing and/or able to engage in different interaction styles to facilitate this crossing. African American females were found to be most likely compared to white females and African American and white males to act as "go-betweens" in elementary classrooms, interacting across race, age, and gender boundaries (Grant 1984). African American and Latina females are also more likely than their male counterparts to act as "cultural straddlers," code switching between nondominant and dominant forms of cultural capital (Carter 2005). However, when looking at such gender differences in code switching, it is important to keep in mind that the cultural context of the school may play an important role. For example, Mehan, Hubbard, and Villanueva (1994) found that both male and female minority high school students were able to switch between a school and neighborhood identity with ease, and the authors suggest that this was due to institutional mechanisms within the school that facilitated the development of a critical consciousness.

The literature on gender differences in integration in multiracial contexts is somewhat inconclusive. While studies on interracial contact and friendships seem to find that African American females are less likely to cross racial lines than others, studies on cultural boundary crossing have found more fluidity in the cultural and interactional styles and identities of African American females, although Mehan, Hubbard, and Villanueva's (1994) study suggests that this may be influenced by the context of the school. It is necessary then

to further investigate how the social and organizational context of the school may influence these gender differences. In this article, I shed light on the perceptions of African American and Latina/Latino females and males as they experience being minorities in a majority white school and identify how the organizational features of the school influence the experiences of these students.

Findings

The Setting

The Village community

Village is a small, historically quaint, and very well-to-do suburb approximately 20 miles outside of NCC [Northeast Capital City]. In Village, the median home price according to the 2000 census was $453,000 compared to $191,000 in NCC. The median household income in Village was $96,000 compared to $40,000 in NCC. Of the 17,000 residents of Village, approximately 92 percent were white, 2 percent African American, 3 percent Asian, 2 percent Other, and 3 percent ethnically identified as Latino. VHS [Village High School] serves both Village and another smaller town demographically similar to Village.

The school

VHS is an academically successful school. Of its students, 94 percent scored proficient or above on the State Achievement Test in English, compared to 58 percent from NCC. A total of 98 percent of its students graduate, with 100 percent of those students going on to college. In NCC, 58 percent of students graduate, with 52 percent of those students going on to college. The student-teacher ratio at VHS is 14:1. Of the 88 teachers at the school, one is African American, one is Asian, and the rest are white.

Only classes in math and science are academically tracked by ability in VHS. However, this did not lead to racially segregated classes as the VDP [voluntary desegregation program] students were such a small minority. Even in lower-tracked math classes that I sat in on, VDP students were never more than a quarter of the students in the class. Very few, if any, VDP students were in honors or advanced placement classes, so the majority of these classes were more segregated than others.

Issues of race—visible and invisible

During my time at the school, I talked to both VDP and VHS students. In informal discussions with VDP students, issues of race almost always entered the conversation. In contrast, VHS students usually did not bring up race or VDP unless explicitly asked. However, the administration and teachers of VHS were very concerned with race relations within the school, especially with the racial achievement gap. An achievement task force was set up, and meetings were conducted with VDP parents. Our presence in the school was greatly supported by this task force for any light we could shed on the issue. During my time at VHS, I also observed the school host a special diversity program that sought to bring down race, gender, class, and status barriers among teens. On the surface then, there would seem to be support for cross-race friendships by authorities, one of Allport's (1954) conditions for positive racial contact.

While the school made visible attempts to address issues of race and had many concerned teachers and administrators with good intentions, during our observations we noted how some attempts to foster diversity only served to highlight the ambivalence of VHS students, teachers, and the community concerning integration. As part of a senior project, one of the VDP students organized a bus tour of NCC neighborhoods

for VHS teachers. Later, while discussing reactions to the tour, the teacher who helped organize it mentioned that someone had said how "surprised they were that drugs were sold so openly" during the tour. In the same meeting, teachers involved in VDP were troubled that VHS teachers were overly concerned with having security at an event that was going to be held in NCC and that few VHS students had bought tickets to it. Also, at a "peace" walk held in Village in honor of a former VDP student killed by gunfire in NCC, VDP students commented that there was still racial segregation at this event by both students and staff.

In many ways, there were clear racial divides within the school—in attitudes and perceptions as well as physically in the cafeteria or in classrooms, where groups usually segregated by race. However, after conducting interviews with groups of VDP students, it was clear that there also were many internal differences among the VDP students in how they integrated into the school.

The Social Experience of Being a Minority at VHS

The experience of being a minority and a VDP student at VHS was very different for males and females. In general, the females were less satisfied with their experiences at VHS. In an interview with a group of 11th-grade African American females, when asked if there was anything they liked about school, one girl replied,

> I value my education and I like coming here because I see my friends and stuff, but when you're in an environment that really isn't … you don't really feel comfortable, then it's kind of hard to focus on one thing to learn… . Sometimes it makes me want to just be like I don't even know why I'm here. I'd rather just go to school in NCC.

This student valued the academic advantages of VHS but struggled with an uncomfortable "environment" in the school. The other girls in this interview echoed a similar feeling. Later on in the interview, the girls indicated that they felt uncomfortable due to racism at VHS as well as conflicting academic pressures. They felt that there was an expectation from the Village community that they would not do well academically, but this expectation of failure was coupled with a pressure from the Village community to succeed as well as to represent all VDP students. In the same interview, another 11th-grade female commented, "And they [the Village community] put us in a group and it's hard because they expect us all to … come here and goof off and not do well and those kids who do, it's like, it's such a big surprise." Her friend, another 11th-grade female, followed up by saying, "As a group, VDP, we have to live up to certain expectations that the community or Village has for us as a group of VDP kids."

The girls felt their individual performance reflected on VDP students as a whole and discussed how they almost wished they could attend school in NCC where their own performance would not represent the group… .

[They] resented the spotlight that was put on VDP students for not doing well in school, such as instituting academic contracts. She also felt that this pressure actually weighed her down when she came out to Village.

Females at VHS appeared to be very affected by the racism they perceived on the part of the community and

the students. Another 11th-grade minority female described what she thought the white students at VHS were thinking about VDP students:

> I'm not going to sit here and say I know what they [the Village community] say but it's like they [VHS students] basically look … it's like, oh, yeah, we can be friends and stuff but knowing that you're a VDP student, I probably know that you're failing all of your classes.

This student felt her academic identity was discounted at VHS and that the students and the community considered her, and VDP students as a whole, a failure.

The girls had negative associations with VHS students, and this led to limited contact with students who were not in VDP. More minority females than males hung out exclusively with other VDP students. In an interview with 10th-grade African American and Latina females, an African American female discussed being ambivalent about how integrated she felt into the school and how she did not feel the need to make an extra effort to make friends with VHS students… .

In this group interview, both of the African American females felt that they had more friends in VDP, while the Latina female felt her friendships were about equally split between VDP and VHS. In a focus group with two 9th-grade females, one African American and one Latina, both females acknowledged that they had friends outside of VDP, especially in classes in which they were the only VDP students, but indicated that most of their friends were in VDP and that VDP students were whom they would choose to hang out with socially. In an interview with 12th-grade minority females, those students felt that their true friends were in VDP and not among the VHS students. When they graduated, they thought they would keep in contact only with their VDP friends. In fact, when three of the students were asked to name one good friend from VHS, they all named the same girl, indicating how small their social circles were. The VDP girls also felt that they were not known at the school in many ways and were resentful that very few minority students were nominated for the Superlatives section in their yearbook (such as Class Clown and Class Flirt) and that the only VDP student (a female) who won was for "Loudest Person."

Overall, the minority girls had negative impressions of the school, the community, and the students. The VDP girls felt a weight on their backs when they took the bus out to Village and felt uncomfortable in an environment where they thought that students, teachers, and the community had low expectations for them.

The males' experiences at VHS were very different from the females'. In stark contrast to the way the females felt when they headed to school each day, the males interviewed frequently described a weight lifting off of their shoulders when they took the bus ride out. For example, an 11th-grade African American male, when asked what he did and did not like about VHS, answered,

> Something I like is I like any time I come out here, I get to be normal. I can just like relax and be cool about things and back home I've got to be like, looking over my shoulder and stuff like that. You see everybody just expressing who they really are… . So, you know, you get to express your

> individuality without worrying about other people judging you [at VHS].

While the girls felt the pressure of different expectations, this young man actually felt that coming to Village, he could be in a place where he was not being judged. He felt very at ease and comfortable in the surroundings. While boys and girls were asked the same initial questions, it was girls who brought up academics and boys who brought up relating to people socially. An African American 12th-grade male, in his interview, also brought up the social aspect of school right away and mentioned how much he liked it, and other boys in his interview agreed. He elaborated by describing how sports played a role in the "atmosphere" at school that he enjoyed:

> People seem to know you [when you play sports]. There are definitely cliques and if you're in the right clique, you have a good time. When you're in class, you're with your friends all the time, and there's people you see every day so it's just … it's nice to have inside jokes and just hang with friends all of the time.

While the females felt that the atmosphere at school was uncomfortable and burdening, the males felt free and accepted by friends.

Researchers have documented that minority boys tend to spend a lot of time hanging out on the street in their neighborhoods (Clampet-Lundquist et al. 2011; Dance 2002; Lopez 2002), which can result in being more exposed to street culture, which requires a constant maintenance of respect and the presentation of a "street" image (Anderson 1990, 1999). As a result, boys mentioned appreciating Village because they did not have to worry about what they said or how they looked at someone. They could relax and did not have to worry about "looking over their shoulder" all the time. Even though the boys engaged in code-switching techniques that required them to change how they acted in Village (which I discuss later), the lack of pressure to constantly be on the lookout for potentially dangerous situations led boys to feel more comfortable in Village.

Minority males in VDP not only felt more comfortable in the school but also had more friends from VHS as well as contacts with the larger Village community. A few boys talked about going to parties in Village or coming out to play basketball with their Village friends on the weekends… .

Many boys also participated in sports, which allowed them to have "host families." Host families were created in a variety of ways. Sometimes coaches informally set up arrangements with Village families who had children on the team, or boys became friends with VHS students and grew friendly with the families. Many students spoke about being very close with their host families. For example, a 12th-grade Latino male and a 12th-grade African American male, in their interview, both discussed how much they appreciated their host families and all they had done for them during their high school careers… .

Host families provided the boys places to stay and also support systems. [One] Latino student said his host father came to the school to talk to his guidance counselor at times. Having host families also allowed the boys to stay overnight in Village, which gave them the opportunity to more easily participate in sports and go

to parties with Village students. They had more time to be social with VHS students, which led to contacts with the students and their parents. In contrast, girls did not mention any relationships with host families.

Although the boys had a better impression of Village and had more white friends than did the girls, this was not because they did not experience any racism or discrimination. Males recounted incidents wherein their friends said the "N" word in front of them or wherein teammates automatically blamed VDP students when things were stolen and asked the boys to "ask on their bus" if anyone had a missing iPod. Although the boys were angered by these incidents and frustrated by the ignorance of their friends, this did not lead them to develop a negative overall impression of Village, as the girls did. The boys were aware of the stereotypes that whites might have about them but felt that this could be overcome once people got to know them… .

Socially Integrating Into the School

In analyzing integration at VHS, we can think about both the VDP students' attempting to become accepted by the VHS students and the VHS students' attempting to become accepted by the VDP students. It is important to consider that both processes may have been going on in some cases. However, in the next section, I will argue that for the most part VHS students did not attempt to integrate into the VDP students' worlds.

Integration—a one-way street

One issue that upset many VDP students was their feeling that VHS students had little interest in understanding their lives. The VDP students expressed a desire for the VHS students to be open to coming to NCC and getting to know who they were rather than just relying on stereotypes. A 12th-grade African American female said in her interview,

> I have some friends from Village and … they don't mind inviting me over to like dinner and like to their house so I enjoy that, but I'm also like, "Okay, come where I live. Like it's okay. Like you won't get shot." And I think it should be like … it should be something that's shared, you know, not just I come out to your town where it's safe and secure but like [they should] just come out [to my town].

The VDP students did not think the VHS students were open to learning about other communities outside of Village, and this student wished that that were part of her friendships with VHS students. Similarly, in an interview with 11th-grade Latina and African American females, when asked what accounted for the separation between the communities, one student responded with the observation that there "isn't enough knowledge." The girls then went on to describe the ideas that the VHS students had of NCC and the VDP students' lives, assuming that they were all constantly exposed to violence, lived in the "ghetto," and did not participate in traditional activities such as trick-or-treating on Halloween. The 11th-grade girls frequently referred to the "box theory," which according to one African American female was the idea that "they [VHS students] live in this box and their parents just feed them these ideas and the media is over here. It's hard and

I feel like it's … at times, it's not their fault but there are actually some people that are just ignorant." For the most part, these girls felt that integration at the school was difficult because it was not up to just the VDP students to integrate into the Village community; rather, there needed to be an effort on the part of the VHS students. In another interview with 10th- and 11th-grade African American males, a 10th-grade male also expressed the idea that integration was not up to just the VDP students by saying, "VDP is not just about coming out to suburban schools, doing the homework and going back to our own homes. VDP is about teaching suburban schools, suburban students what it's like to live in the inner city, what it feels like to be a person of color."

Although the VDP students did not think that integration should be solely their responsibility, for the most part the process was one-sided. The interviews and observations I conducted shed light on some of the ways the VDP students attempted, or did not attempt, to integrate with the VHS students and how this varied by gender.

Strategies of social integration—status

Blau (1960) posits that to integrate into a community, one must be attractive to those in that community and that usually we are attracted to those of higher status. While status is usually associated with socioeconomic class, in the world of adolescence, many other elements can confer social status, such as athleticism, physical attractiveness, personality, or participation in extracurricular activities (Adams and Bettis 2003; Coleman 1961; Eder and Kinney 1995; Goto 1997; Kinney 1993). While most VDP students were below VHS students in socioeconomic status, they did have other kinds of status characteristics that were valued at VHS. The VDP males, in particular, were able to use their status as athletes to socially integrate with the VHS students as well as the status attributed to hip-hop and rap stars, whose style they physically represented, to gain friends.

Many of the males interviewed cited friendships formed through sports. Being a part of sports teams helped make them more known at school, and increased visibility, especially through athletics, usually increases a student's popularity (Eder 1985; Flores-Gonzalez 2005; Kinney 1993). An 11th-grade African American male explained how sports helped him make friends by saying,

> I got to know a lot of kids through sports. You know, baseball kind of boosts up a lot of your confidence, a lot of your friends and stuff like that. So just, I mean, sometimes when you're practicing with the varsity guys and, you know, that's how you know your name starts to circulate… . You start to meet some of their friends, and they start to meet some of your friends and then your whole fan base … or your whole, you know, friend base just expands.

Participating in sports teams facilitated making friends with VHS students, and it also brought social status to the boys. As the above student stated, sports made him more known among boys on the team and then later in the school as a whole. Being involved with sports and being seen as athletic (a masculine characteristic) usually brings more social rewards for males than it does for females (Coleman 1961; Eder and Parker 1987).

Girls' sports in general, aside from cheerleading, tend to have less visibility than male athletics (Eder and Kinney 1995). Being involved with sports gave boys both status and the opportunity to interact with VHS students. In fact, when VHS males were asked to discuss segregation between VHS and VDP students, they frequently talked about sports as a way that they crossed those racial boundaries. In an interview with Caucasian and Asian 11th-grade males from VHS, when asked what could account for the racial separation in the cafeteria, one of the Caucasian males responded, "I think the one thing that really does bring us together is sports, the VDP kids and Village. I mean, I think most of the friends I've made from VDP were through like track or other sports." As I will discuss later, females did not participate in sports to the same degree as did males… .

The males were able to gain social status based on suburban ideas of the urban hip-hop culture. This allowed them to present a certain masculine image that gained them status (Majors and Billson 1992). The males' physical appearance and clothing personified this hip-hop image, although the males did not act in a way that might frighten or alienate the white males. The females contend that in the context of NCC, the VDP boys are not actually the tough youth but that they use that image of black male masculinity to gain status with males in suburbia. Perry (2002:109) suggests that white suburban males may listen to hip-hop and embrace aspects of the culture because they want to be associated with "characteristics of blackness, namely being cool, tough and hip."

The girls had fewer opportunities to participate in sports and other school activities that might have brought them status. While athleticism usually brings status to males, being friends with other popular girls, such as cheerleaders, can contribute to increasing girls' status, so popularity for females is based on not only what they do but also whom they know (Eder 1985; Eder and Kinney 1995). As I will discuss in the next section, the females in VDP had less opportunity to participate in activities and therefore less opportunity to make connections with other girls.

In addition, the females were not able to trade on stereotypes of their femininity that would have value at VHS. While we did not collect direct data on the rates of interracial dating, observations suggest that this mostly occurred between VDP males and VHS females. This mirrors the findings of other studies, which have attributed the lack of interracial dating between African American girls and white boys to the status hierarchy, which tends to put African American females in particular at the bottom (Schofield 1982). In an interview with 10th-grade African American and Latina females, the Latina female mentioned that she had had a crush on a VHS boy. When she told him he had "nice legs" and hung out outside his class to say "hi," she felt he went out of his way to then avoid her. Her friends, somewhat jokingly, agreed that the boy was "scared" of her. In contrast, I observed VDP males flirting and hanging out with VHS females on multiple occasions, and at least one steady relationship occurred between an African American male and a white female during my observations. These differences in interactions with the opposite sex may also have prevented the VDP females from gaining status as girls gain status through their popularity with the opposite sex (Schofield 1982). In addition, as evidenced previously by the nomination in the Superlatives section of the yearbook, the females tended to be seen as loud, obnoxious, hostile, or having other negative characteristics associated with African American females (Fordham 1993).

Strategies of social integration—approachability

The males also attempted to socially integrate into the Village community by making themselves more approachable. VDP males appeared to change how they acted depending on whether they were at home or at school more than the females. While Blau (1960) argued that being approachable meant using self-deprecating modesty to play down one's status, I argue that for the VDP boys, being approachable meant changing their speech and behavior to play down stereotypes of minority males that painted them as aggressive, violent, and unintelligent. In a group interview of 10th- and 11th-grade minority males, students talked about how they changed some of their behaviors:

> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 1: They … I hold my speech every day.
> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 2: You've got to be … I change up.
> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 3: They change up to become more intellectual with the other Village kids.
> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 1: It works better like …
> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 3: Yeah. It does. It does. They gain more white friends.
> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 2: It helps you interact.

Here, the males are consciously aware of what they say in VHS and note that what they say and how they say it affects how students treat them. The boys also changed their behavior in other ways. In the same interview, a student said,

> Let's say a white kid called me an idiot. I'm not going to do the whole rah, rah, I'm going to try to beat you up type thing. It's just … you got to know when and where to do that as for if I was in NCC, I'd be like, "Let's fight right now then." Compared to here [VHS] where you're just like, no.

Researchers have noted the highly aggressive and violent "code of the street" (Anderson 1999) that is prevalent in many inner-city neighborhoods. This code is based on respect, an element that must be maintained and defended at all costs. This student states how if he were at home in NCC, he would not be able to shrug off an insult and instead would become aggressive. In VHS, he can leave that persona behind and become a part of a culture that does not require hypervigilance of respect. In the same interview, another male commented, "It's like, they're white people. You try not to be obnoxious because like he said, they get scared. There's just a bunch of other things you have to … you can't do what you would do in NCC and vice versa."

In contrast, the females claimed they did not change how they acted when in VHS. One female stated that she did not want to change herself because this was her last year, and she just did not care anymore about the school or how people saw her. In another interview, a Latina female also indicated that she did not change her dress, her speech, her tastes, or her behavior. However, some admitted that they changed when they were at home in their neighborhoods. For example, one 12th-grade female said, "When I get home [to NCC] I'm making sure I don't have my book bag." She also said that she would not tell her NCC friends that she did her

homework.

The minority males who were interviewed also claimed that the females did not change how they acted. In an interview with minority males in 10th and 11th grades, when asked what sort of issues the females had to deal with in adjusting to VHS, the males stated, "When they [females in VDP] come here, they bring that little hood mentality here as well which is 100 percent bad." Another male agreed, stating, "I don't know how they feel because I haven't asked them about that, but I just know they act ghetto sometimes and it's not called for."

From the VDP students' interviews, it appears that the VDP girls did not attempt to make themselves more approachable to the Village community. This is also reflected in interviews with VHS girls, where they seem to attribute any separation between VHS and VDP students to the VDP students' being "hostile" or being very close-knit and therefore not welcoming of VHS students… .

[One] student attributes the majority of the barriers to the VDP students themselves and their lack of approachability. In another interview with 12th-grade African American and Caucasian females, a Caucasian female, who was dating an African American male in VDP, discussed how intimidated she felt sometimes around VDP students since they were so close to each other and such a tight community.

Although the VHS females do not directly mention the VDP females in their responses, as students tend to make friends within their own gender, it is likely that their ideas about VDP students were influenced by their experiences with female VDP students. In addition, when interracial dating did occur, it was between an African American male and a white female, so it is unlikely that the VHS girls viewed the VDP males as hostile. While this is evidence that the VDP females were not viewed as very approachable by the VHS community, it is difficult to interpret the sequence of cause and effect. It could be the VDP females were in fact reacting to the ignorance of the VHS students, which the VHS students interpreted as hostility, which led to a lack of social integration among the VDP females. The VDP females also may have realized that they lacked the status characteristics necessary to gain social acceptance at VHS and so may not have put in the same effort the boys did into being approachable, as it would have little effect on their social integration, thereby leading the VHS girls to interpret this as hostility.

Organizational Aspects of the School Affecting Integration

In the previous section, I discussed the gender differences in the strategies of social integration among the VDP students and also identified the perceptions of the VHS students concerning the integration of the VDP students. The perceptions of racial friendliness on both sides, however, were intricately related to the opportunities available for interaction and the conditions under which interaction did occur. In this section, I contend that the lack of social integration and the perceptions of hostility and ignorance among the VHS and VDP females were in part due to school practices that limited the amount of contact these girls had with each other and structured the contact they did have to be under less favorable conditions than the boys'.

Both macrostructural theory and contact theory suggest integration is largely a function of the organization

and structure of the school day. The organization of the school affected the opportunities for cross-race interaction differently for females in VDP than for males, giving males more opportunity in general to interact and more opportunities under the conditions necessary for positive contact (Allport 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006).

The school's transportation practices and host family provisions for students were set up to provide for both male and female VDP students; however, this interacted with differences in parental supervision of sons versus daughters and gender differences in students' own preferences concerning staying overnight in someone else's home, which led to differential effects. According to the interview data, parents of VDP girls worried about their daughters and were protective over them. The logistics of being a VDP student required a great deal of travel, with students getting up very early to catch the bus to school and having a long ride home in the evening. One bus left right after school at 3:15 and another left at 5:15. After the last bus, the only option was to walk to the train station in the center of Village and take a train to the center of NCC, which would then require multiple other transfers for the students to arrive at their homes. This meant that for the students to participate in many after-school activities, including sports teams, they either needed to be picked up by their parents or needed to stay with a host family. While the males embraced this idea and gained access to important contacts through their host families, females did not. In an interview, a 12th-grade minority female explained that she quit basketball, even though she was quite good, because the practices ended so late and she did not like taking the train home. When I was talking with her informally during my observations, she explained to me that she did not like to stay at other people's homes. Other females mentioned quitting sports teams with their parents' support because parents worried about how their girls would get home at night… .

In contrast, no males mentioned a parent's worry about their whereabouts when they would stay over in Village.

Being unable to participate in sports or other after-school activities prevented the girls from forming friendships with VHS students and from feeling a part of the school. Girls felt that because the school did not attempt to make it easier for them to participate in activities, they were not valued. In an interview with 12th-grade African American females, the girls expressed anger and bitterness about the lack of attention paid to their dilemma and cited examples of trying to participate in fencing and student government with little success.

Of course, not all males participated in sports, and these exceptions help illuminate how school practices that valued the VDP students for certain characteristics, such as athleticism, served to devalue students who did not fit that ideal. For example, a 10th-grade African American male shared with me his disappointment with and anger at the school. In my field notes that day I wrote,

> He also felt like it was hard at Village to get involved in interesting clubs like the Model UN or Amnesty International because they meet at 6:30 and the last bus leaves at 5:00. If you can't find someone to sleep over with, it's hard. Most parents can't come and pick up their kids, and the [train] is unreliable. He compared it though to sports teams—if a coach needed a good VDP player

> to stay, he would arrange for him to spend the night with a Village student, even if the two weren't great friends. He said this showed what they valued VDP students for… .

Not being as able to participate in after-school activities prevented VDP students from having the simple opportunity to meet and interact with more VHS students and also prevented them from being in situations that fulfilled Allport's (1954) conditions for ideal contact (equal status; common, cooperative goals; and institutional support). Academic tracking can prevent interracial contact due to lack of opportunity and differences in status. While VHS did not track all of its classes, some were tracked, so general academic performance was not hard to determine. From interviews, it appeared that the girls did not think the VHS students thought of them as equally intelligent, so the VDP girls most likely did not perceive that there were equal status conditions in classes. Sports and other cooperative group activities, however, did put students on equal levels and also had them working toward a common goal. Other studies have supported the finding that participating in integrated extracurricular activities leads to improved race relations (Moody 2001; Steams, Buchmann, and Bonneau 2009). This may partly explain why boys seemed to have a more positive view of VHS and a better social experience.

In addition to structural barriers to participation in extracurricular activities, other school practices that were in place to support VDP students academically only served to further distance the girls from the school community. The school set aside a special room for tutoring during study periods for VDP students and hired an African American woman to supervise and help the students. Although the room and the supports were intended for all VDP students, mostly female minority students took advantage of the study room. The males did not feel supported by the supervisor and felt that she gave preference to the females, so fewer males spent time in there. As a result, they interacted more with other VHS students while the girls secluded themselves in the VDP room. This resulted in disadvantages for both minority males and minority females—the males did not get the help they needed academically since they felt uncomfortable in such a feminine space, and the females were even more socially isolated in the school.

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READING 35

The Challenge of Diverse Public Schools

Toby L. Parcel, Joshua A. Hendrix, and Andrew J. Taylor

Toby L. Parcel, Joshua A. Hendrix, and Andrew J. Taylor help us understand why it is so difficult to diversify public schools from the community perspective. They describe the public reactions to different political approaches to desegregating the schools in Wake County, North Carolina. This reading provides a close-up look at local responses to political approaches to diversifying schools. In this reading, they illustrate the complex nature of desegregating public schools and how this overlaps with the realities of residential segregation.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What changes in the organization of schools in Wake County were used to diversify (desegregate) schools in Wake County prior to 2000?
2. Why did Wake County schools become resegregated?
3. What are the most recent arguments for and opposed to diversifying the schools?

Wake County, N.C. citizens are divided. Some believe that school integration—by race and social class—is important for the well-being of all children. One citizen told us of the dangers of the opposite: "It is not OK to segregate our schools. It is not OK to deliberately create high-poverty schools and claim that you are going to have all these fixes, whether it is funding or innovative programs, etc. It is just wrong, and that is why I am in this debate."

From "The Challenge of Diverse Public Schools," by T. L. Parcel, J. A. Hendrix, and A. J. Taylor, *Contexts*, 15(1), pp. 42–47. Copyright 2016 by the American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

Another parent's concerns reflected the costs of implementing a "diversity" policy: "I see young children standing out there in the cold and dark at 6:30 in the morning, and it is totally obnoxious that any polite society would do this to the children. It is not safe, it is not fair, and it certainly is not fostering any good educational system; people generally want good schools close to home."

Heated debates around these issues culminated in a watershed Wake County school board election in October 2009 that switched the board from majority Democratic and liberal to majority Republican and conservative, which resulted in consequences. By early 2010, this new board voted to discard the district's diversity policy in favor of one that placed more emphasis on neighborhood schools.

These events garnered attention because they threatened to roll back decades of successful school integration, a policy vehicle for promoting positive race relations and facilitating upward mobility. Integration had also been associated with county growth and prosperity. Would these trends now be reversed and mean the end of

Wake County's economic and social progress? Would Wake become more like other large school districts characterized by strong school resegregation, with negative educational and social consequences?

Consensus and Its Dissolution

Wake's history shows that a large southern county comprised of urban, suburban, and rural populations could sustain successful school desegregation over many years. In 1976, after federal pressure, Wake County and the city of Raleigh merged their school districts to create one countywide system of 55,000 students. Innovative superintendents used magnet schools located in central Raleigh to entice White and middle-class families to enroll their children, thus promoting voluntary school integration through school choice. This worked: there were rising test scores, decreased racial gaps in student achievement, and strong satisfaction with schools among parents. Wake County's population rose, but the county was able to educate this growing numbers of students, many of them from families migrating to Raleigh from other parts of the country.

To promote desegregation in the early 1990s, up to 1,000 African-American and White children were bused across the county each year, with minority children more likely to be bused than Whites. This strategy meant that some children were transferred to new schools for reasons beyond graduating to middle or high school. Children were often re-assigned in groups, which preserved social ties but parental relationships with schools and teachers were inevitably disrupted. Still, at this time, complaints were few, especially compared to other communities in the South.

The county prospered both socially and economically, but prosperity had its price. By 2000, suburban communities such as Cary and Apex had acquired the reputation of some of the "best places" to live. Population growth in these areas exceeded school capacity, while parts of central Raleigh were decreasing in population. The county was now responsible for educating close to 100,000 children. By 2000, court rulings had largely disallowed race as a basis for school assignments, so Wake began using social class and achievement data instead. Estimates varied regarding how many children were bused for purposes of achieving diversity along economic and achievement lines, with the board arguing it was always less than 5% of children each year. But county growth appeared to increase this proportion and board reliance on reassignment increased over time. By 2008, the board proposed that more than 25,000 children be reassigned over the next three years. Some children from kindergarten through high school had already been moved multiple times.

Younger children could not be assured they would attend the same schools as older siblings. Parents could not be guaranteed that relationships they formed with teachers, administrators, and other parents would pay off in the future. Population growth was also increasing commute times for both parents and children, who might be traveling many miles from home. Complaints about annual reassignments increased.

A second school board strategy proved even more controversial. To make good use of fixed resources, the board created year-round schools, which had some elementary and middle-school children on three out of four nine-week tracks, but rotated one group of students out at all times. Although year-round schools required more personnel, this strategy cut costs by slowing down the need for school construction. Some parents liked year-round schools and sought them out. Board policy eventually mandated large groups of families to enter the year-round system or face unattractive alternatives. For example, opting out of a year-round school could saddle some kids with a longer bus ride and earlier pickup times. Families with a child in a

year-round magnet school who also had a child in a public high school automatically had kids on two different school calendars, because all county high schools remained on traditional calendars. By 2009, these conditions were politically unsustainable. We wondered, what is the price of diverse schools? Had adherence to the diversity policy come at too high a cost?

We began our study by reviewing media reports, and continued by interviewing 24 locals who were either pro-diversity or favored neighborhood schools. We conducted two focus groups, and used those discussions to help us develop a telephone survey for more than 1,700 Wake County adults. We asked questions about learning benefits for children when they experience economic and racial diversity in schools and in classrooms; learning benefits from neighborhood schools; opinions on the length of bus rides; implementation of student assignment policy, general thoughts about the school board, and a variety of social and background characteristics.

Diversity vs. Neighborhood Schools

Wake's debate seemed to originate with two different views of how children should be assigned to public schools. One promoted a county-wide perspective in which the school board would assign children so that no schools were disproportionately poor or low-achieving. This would disrupt any connection between residential segregation and school segregation. Proponents of this policy feared the county's economic future would be threatened if public schools were viewed unfavorably by firms and middle-class employees considering relocating to Raleigh. Since the county's assignment policy was associated with rising test scores and decreased achievement gaps, they viewed diverse schools as an investment in county well-being.

The other side championed proximity of home and school, so that children's school attendance reinforced neighborhood social ties and vice versa. Under these conditions, however, schools would replicate residential segregation, a familiar condition in many American communities. Such realities would intensify inequality across generations, a situation that diversity advocates disliked.

Media reports, interviews and focus groups reflect either pro-diversity sentiments or worries about the disadvantages of diversity policy implementation. However, our findings showed other sentiments as well. First, disrupting the proximity of home and school was clearly a challenge for families. As a former superintendent noted in an interview, "I was having a forum over at Moore Square Middle School and it was about 200 … predominantly African-American parents … and I will not forget the parent who stood up and said, 'Well, we do not understand why we have to put our five-year-old on that bus and ride for an hour and twenty minutes to a school that is a [significant] distance from the house'."

Others suggested that having children attend school far from home affected their capacity to meet parental responsibilities. It meant challenges for parents who were often juggling the demands of multiple jobs and commuting to work, as well as managing children's school assignments and their changes. One African-American interviewee recalled a storm when half an inch of snow accumulated, causing icy roads, early dismissals, and long traffic delays. Some students ended up spending the night at their schools. She said, "But that assignment [plan], how far is [too far]? For the parent, how quickly can I get to my child? That was exhibited when we had that freak storm. How quickly can I get to my child in an emergency, from [my] workplace or home?"

Second, citizens worried that children's academic well-being would be harmed by reassignments to distant schools. As one interviewee stated: "Really, if you think about elementary school, you know a lot of it is creating a love for school and so if you are putting a heavy burden on a child and … they are having to get up extra early … you would think (this situation) would potentially, in some students, create more of a negative taste for education and send them down the wrong road."

Similarly, one African-American community leader suggested: "I just don't think diversity, shipping kids around, really matters as much as them getting a good education, and at the end of the day, there is a job." Nor was this concern confined to those skeptical of diversity's benefits. An African-American, pro-diversity

parent at a focus group said: "I will use the word 'repulsive,' and the reason I say it is repulsive is because I am tired of all of this sitting on the backs of the children… . It is the children that you are busing; it is the children that you are manipulating… . It is not on their back to take the long bus ride or be pulled out of your class."

Third, the process of changing student assignments created uncertainty for families and for children. Each winter the school board identified groups of children they were proposing to move to keep up with uneven population growth and to avoid schools becoming disproportionately low income. Hearings with the board followed. Sometimes parents were granted exemptions from proposed moves. Others applied for magnet schools, preferring those placements, and their certainty, to the possibility of future reassignments. Board decisions came out in May, which meant that some families were unsure about school placement for several months during each year. Emotions of both parents and children ran high.

One involved parent stated, "The discontent that I was hearing was the unbelievable inconsistency in feeder patterns. People would not know from one year to the next where their kid was going to school, and not only would they not know where they were going to go this year, they did not even have a sense of, OK, well, you will go to this elementary school, this middle school, and then this high school. It switched with no rhyme or reason." This uncertainty meant parents felt unsure about how to protect child well-being, dearly at the heart of the conflict, but seemingly beyond the debate between preferences for diversity and neighborhood schools.

From our survey we also learned that preferences for diversity and neighborhood schools were not even diametrically opposed. Citizens who favored diversity were less likely to favor neighborhood schools and vice versa, but the relationship was far from perfect. We found that nearly everyone favors neighborhood schools. They are well ingrained in American life and likely reflect the type of school arrangement many of today's adults experienced when they were young. However, a significant subset of Wake County citizens who favor neighborhood schools also strongly support diversity as a basis for children's school assignments.

Finally, our survey also showed that attitudes among African Americans in Raleigh were complex. They were more supportive of diversity-based school assignments than Whites, and less supportive of neighborhood schools. But social class also mattered. Affluent African Americans favored diversity more than their lower income counterparts, who were managing both work and family with fewer resources. For them, having children assigned to schools far from their homes, even in the name of diversity, was less attractive. More highly educated African Americans worried less about the challenges, dangers, and uncertainties inherent in assignment policy implementation than those with less education.

Is Wake Typical?

We wondered how unique Raleigh was. Wake's history lacked examples of "massive resistance" to desegregation characteristic of other southern communities during the 1960s and 1970s. The district was never under a court order to desegregate; it had done so voluntarily (although within the context of federal pressure). Wake's public education system had improved for more than thirty years after its creation in 1976. These factors, we reasoned, made it at least somewhat unique, and had created a social and political climate supportive of diverse schools. In addition, the county began creating diverse schools before significant amounts of White flight and "bright flight" occurred. While the diversity policy was in effect, middle-class residents had less incentive to locate in just a few neighborhoods because street address did not strictly dictate which schools children would attend, thus discouraging residential segregation.

We concluded that compared to other large school districts, Wake is relatively unique in the longevity of its school diversity policy, which we see as based both on the demographic capacity to create diverse schools as well as the collective political will to make that happen. For example, it sustained diverse school assignments longer than Charlotte, and it avoided the substantial segregation of schools experienced in places like Richmond. Despite the challenges involved in implementing economically diverse schools, Wake persevered longer than many other school districts. This means Wake was an exemplar for other large school districts that had the demographic capacity and political will to create diverse schools.

What Does the Future Hold?

The 2011 and 2013 elections returned the school board to firm Democratic majorities, likely because of citizen concerns with a lack of transparency by the Republican board. However, this new board chose to maintain past reassignments, not initiate new ones. This approach responded to concerns regarding the challenges, dangers, and uncertainties previously associated with mandatory reassignments and year-round school attendance. This also meant that school resegregation based on socioeconomic status increased. Magnet schools remain popular, while parents now also have an increased number of charter school options. The impact of greater school choice on the traditionally strong middle-class character of Wake public schools is still unclear.

Demographics remain important. Currently the district enrolls more than 155,000 students, making it the 16th largest school district in the country, and managing district growth continues to be challenging. Wake's public school–aged population has now become majority-minority, largely because of Latino immigration. Given the association between race and family income, in the future Wake will find creating schools mixed by family income to be more complicated. More than ever, it will need to rely on its strong traditions of maintaining diverse schools to promote both equal opportunity and encourage county prosperity.

Recommended Resources

Lareau, Annette, and Kimberly A. Goyette, eds. 2014. Choosing Homes, Choosing Schools. Thousand Oaks, CA: Russell Sage Foundation. Explores the reality that for many families, choosing homes and choosing schools happens simultaneously.

Parcel, Toby L., Joshua A. Hendrix, and Andrew J. Taylor. 2015. "Race, Politics, and School Assignment Policies in Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Wake County, North Carolina." In R. A. Mickelson, S. S. Smith, and A. Hawn Nelson, eds., Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: School Desegregation and Resegregation in Charlotte. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press. A comparison of Charlotte and Raleigh history, demographics, and school characteristics suggests why Raleigh sustained school desegregation longer than Charlotte.

Parcel, Toby L., and Andrew J. Taylor. 2015. The End of Consensus: Diversity, Neighborhoods, and the Politics of Public Schools Assignments. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. A mixed-methods study of the creation of the Wake County Public School System, the evolution of consensus surrounding diverse schools, and why this consensus dissolved, with comparisons to other school districts.

Ryan, James E. 2010. Five Miles Away, A World Apart: One City, Two Schools, and the Story of Educational Opportunity in Modern America. New York: Oxford University Press. The story of two racially segregated high schools, one in urban Richmond and the other in Henrico County, Virginia.

READING 36

Charter Schools and the Risk of Increased Segregation

Iris C. Rotberg

While the previous two readings focus on the interpersonal responses (micro level) to the processes of diversifying public schools, Iris C. Rotberg looks at policy decisions and research (meso and macro levels) that examines the impacts of charter schools, one proposed solution for creating an opportunity for all students to learn. She concludes that policy decisions that support school choice and the charter school movement are linked to resegregation in primarily urban school districts in the United States, with similar evidence from other countries. This reading focuses our attention more on initiatives at the United States federal level that encourage school choice, policies that are likely to continue and perhaps grow stronger with an increased emphasis on charter schools in the Trump administration.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why are charter schools more likely than busing plans to lead to increasing segregation?
2. Based upon this reading and other readings in Chapter 7 and this chapter, what program designs are more likely to diversify charter schools?
3. Why are special education and language-minority students likely to be underrepresented in charter schools?

… [W]e don't have to guess about the consequences of one of the Obama Administration's most visible policies: the national expansion of charter schools. We need only turn to a large body of relevant research showing that charter schools, on average, don't have an academic advantage over traditional public schools (Gill et al., 2007; Gleason, Clark, Tuttle, & Dwoyer, 2010), but they do have a significant risk of leading to increased segregation (Booker, Zimmer, & Buddin, 2005; Gulosino & d'Entremont, 2011).

From "Charter Schools and the Risk of Increased Segregation," by I. C. Rotberg, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(5), 26–30. Copyright 2014 by Phi Delta Kappa International. Reprinted with permission.

In spite of this, the policy on charter schools remain[ed] a centerpiece of the [Obama] administration's initiatives (as it was, in a different form, in the Bush Administration), despite abundant evidence that the policy is inconsistent with the longstanding goal of promoting school integration.

Although there has been considerable public attention to test-based accountability and to comparing student achievement in charter and traditional public schools, there has been less attention to the link between charter schools and increased segregation. A policy that exacerbates existing levels of segregation should be a major concern, particularly in the current environment: large inequalities in income and wealth (Stone, Trisi, & Sherman, 2012), a widening gap in student achievement between affluent and low-income students (Reardon, 2011), and implementation of state voucher and tax plans (Povich, 2013; National Conference of State Legislatures, 2013), which further contribute to student stratification. This article considers how a policy

promoting the expansion of charter schools risks increasing segregation based on race, ethnicity, and income. It also considers the potential for increasing the segregation of special education and language-minority students and for contributing to religious and cultural stratification not typically found in U.S. public education.

Federal Policy and Research Evidence

The Obama Administration promoted expanding the number of charter schools, both through its public advocacy and through the Race to the Top (RttT) competition (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). RttT gave states a strong incentive to reduce or eliminate caps that had previously limited charter school expansion. Nationally, the proportion of charter schools to public schools has tripled since 2000 (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013a) and, in the last several years, some states have accelerated that trend in response to RttT (Cavanaugh, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

The conclusions summarized in the sections that follow are based on a wide array of research in the United States and in other countries. The research review of school choice programs in the United States is focused on charter schools to reflect the focus of the Obama Administration. The research review in other countries includes a broader set of programs because the 10 countries reviewed use a variety of school choice initiatives —academies, vouchers, or subsidies—in structuring their education systems. For purposes of analyzing segregation effects, however, these various initiatives operate in very similar ways.

The studies reviewed used a mix of methodologies. Some compared the demographic characteristics of students in school choice programs with those in the traditional public schools they would have attended. Others compared the characteristics of students in school choice programs with those in the surrounding communities. Case studies were also conducted to increase understanding of the reasons for the choices families and schools make. Regardless of the specific methodology used, however, the preponderance of research evidence leads to the following conclusions:

> ***#1. There is a strong link between school choice programs and an increase in student segregation by race, ethnicity, and income.***

Studies in a number of different states and school districts in the United States show that charter schools often lead to increased school segregation (Bifulco & Ladd, 2007; Booker, Zimmer, & Buddin, 2005; Cobb & Glass, 2003; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2013; Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2011; Furgeson et al., 2012; Garcia, 2008; Glenn, 2011; Mickelson, Bottia, & Southworth, 2008; Nathanson, Corcoran, & Baker-Smith, 2013), a finding that is consistent with research in a number of other countries, including Australia (Luke, 2010), Canada (Yoon & Gulson, 2010), Chile (Elacqua, 2012), Denmark (Rangvid, 2007), England (Burgess, Wilson, & Lupton, 2005), Germany (Pietsch & Stubbe, 2007), Israel (Nir, Inbar, & Eyal, 2010), the Netherlands (Karsten, Felix, Ledoux, & Meijnen, 2006), New Zealand (Thomson, 2010), and Sweden (Böhlmark & Lindahl, 2007). In many cases, school choice programs exacerbate current school segregation and, in more heterogeneous settings, lead to the stratification of students who were previously in integrated environments.

The primary exceptions to increased student stratification are in communities that are already so highly segregated by race, ethnicity, and income that further increases are virtually impossible, or they occur in school

choice programs that are targeted to increase diversity—not a goal of most charter schools or school choice programs generally (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2012; Ritter, Jensen, Kisida, & McGee, 2010).

#2. The risk of segregation is a direct reflection of the design of the school choice program.

Certain design features magnify the risk of segregation. For example, a growing number of charter schools target specific racial or ethnic groups and therefore lead directly to increased segregation (Eckes, Fox, & Buchanan, 2011; Institute on Race and Poverty, 2008). In addition, several other designs are particularly vulnerable to increased segregation. Segregation effects are especially pronounced in charter schools run by education management organizations (Miron, Urschel, Mathis, & Tornquist, 2010) as well as in large, unregulated choice programs (Johnston, Burgess, Wilson, & Harris, 2007; Gill et al, 2007). Partial government vouchers or subsidies to which families must add the remaining tuition costs virtually guarantee increased segregation because many families can't afford the costs (Arenas, 2004; Luke, 2010). Increased segregation is also a predictable outcome for programs that select students based on their achievement levels because of the high correlation between socioeconomic status (SES) and achievement, compounded by the fact that low-SES students are often less likely to be referred to selective programs even when their achievement levels are high (Contini & Scagni, 2010; Olszweski-Kubilius & Clarenbach, 2012; Pietsch & Stubbe, 2007; Soderstrom & Uusitalo, 2010; United Federation of Teachers, 2010; West & Hind, 2007).

Some school choice programs do have a positive effect on integration. A small proportion of charter schools are designed specifically to increase diversity (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2012). In addition, magnet school programs, which were originally started to increase integration, have often succeeded in doing so. However, like other school choice programs, magnet schools tend to segregate when diversity is no longer a specific goal (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2011).

The uphill battle faced by magnet schools demonstrates how strongly the odds are against programs that do not focus on diversity. Families often choose schools based on their perceptions of the extent to which other families in the school community are "similar" to them (Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2008; Garcia, 2008; Karsten et al., 2006; Roda & Wells, 2013). Even when the choice is based on other considerations, such as the characteristics of the educational model, high-SES families have far greater leverage in gaining access to the most competitive schools, both in finding the information needed to choose among schools and in having the resources (for example, to support transportation costs) to enable their children to attend the schools (Bunka, 2011; Jacobs, 2011; Jarvis & Alvanides, 2008; Karsten et al., 2003; Nathanson, Corcoran, & Baker-Smith, 2013; Ozek, 2011).

Charter schools, even under a lottery system, also choose—sometimes explicitly and sometimes indirectly—and increase the probability of segregation. They limit the services they provide, thereby excluding certain students, or offer programs that appeal only to a limited group of families (Furgeson et al., 2012; Welner, 2013). Some charter schools also exclude students from consideration because their parents can't meet the demanding parent involvement requirements, or they expel students who haven't met the school's academic or behavioral requirements (Miron, Urschel, Mathis, & Tornquist, 2010; Heilig, Williams, McNeil, & Lee,

2011). Charter schools also choose where to locate which, in turn, influences enrollment options given the transportation difficulties for low-income students (Gulosino & d'Entremont, 2011; Jarvis & Alvanides, 2008; Ozek, 2011).

In some communities, charter schools have a higher concentration of minority students than traditional public schools (Booker, Zimmer, & Buddin, 2005; Institute on Race and Poverty, 2008). In others, charter schools serve as a vehicle for "white flight" (Bifulco, Ladd, & Ross, 2008; Ni, 2007; Renzulli & Evans, 2005; Heilig, Williams, McNeil, & Lee, 2011). School segregation increases in both cases—in the charter schools students attend and in the traditional public schools they would have attended (Institute on Race and Poverty, 2008). This outcome can be offset only if the choice program has a specific goal to increase diversity.

However, the federal role in encouraging charter school diversity has been minimal. Although legislation in some states includes provisions on diversity, without oversight, the legislative language has had little effect. Advising charter schools to be diverse will not make it happen (Lubienski & Weitzel, 2009; Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2011).

> ***#3. Even beyond race, ethnicity, and income, school choice programs result in increased segregation for special education and language-minority students, as well as in increased segregation of students based on religion and culture.***

Special education and language-minority students are under-represented in charter schools, unless the schools are specifically targeted to these population groups (Arcia, 2006; Sattin-Bajaj & Suarez-Orozco, 2012; Scott, 2012). Even when the students are selected in a lottery, they are discouraged from attending charter schools when the schools do not provide the services they require.

Perhaps less visible, but clearly growing, are charter schools that target specific religious and cultural groups (Eckes, Fox, & Buchanan, 2011). Some of these schools were formerly private religious schools, schools that are likely to attract specific religious groups (for example, by offering extensive language instruction in Hebrew, Arabic, or Greek), or schools designed to appeal to families with particular social or political values. Such niche schools often result in the segregation of students by religion or by social values—a type of stratification many countries now struggle with that has not traditionally been prevalent in U.S. public education. As charter schools proliferate, so do these schools—a trend that will almost inevitably lead to a public school system that is increasingly fragmented.

Implications

The research evidence shows the risk of policies that have led to a largely uncontrolled expansion of charter schools. Yet, the evidence has had little influence on public policy (Rotberg, 2012). Despite hundreds of studies on school choice, the general perception is that we have little research information or that the information we do have is ambiguous.

Researchers bear some responsibility. Research reports often conclude by saying, "We need more research."

The conclusion apparently stems from a belief that inconsistent results are the same as ambiguous results and, therefore, are of little use in policy formulation. Yet, the inconsistency is a reflection of the reality that charter schools vary depending on the purpose and design of the programs and the settings in which they're implemented. We won't discover the single "right" answer about the effects of charter schools no matter how many studies we conduct.

Moreover, when researchers simply conclude that we need more research, they miss the opportunity to communicate to policy makers the implications of the large body of research on school choice that already exists. The variance in findings is not a negative; it is an essential basis for policy formulation. If we fail to communicate clearly to policy makers the implications of the evidence we have, we should not be surprised when research is not used. The fact is we know why certain initiatives lead to increases in segregation along different dimensions: race, ethnicity, income, religion, and social values, as well as for students who need special education services or English-language instruction. We also know why certain initiatives—although relatively few—achieve diversity and how that is accomplished.

Federal policy, however, applies to school districts nationwide, regardless of their characteristics or the design of their charter school initiatives. It does not distinguish among initiatives based on their probability of increasing student integration. A policy that encourages states to expand charter schools applies across the board both to programs that are designed to facilitate integration and to the far larger number that are likely to increase segregation.

I am not under the illusion that by modifying federal policy on charter schools we would solve the basic problem of segregation. But we could at least eliminate one factor exacerbating it: the federal pressure on states and school districts to increase the number of charter schools, even in situations that might lend themselves to increased segregation. Instead of serving as a cheerleader for charter schools, the federal government might instead support diversity in schools and, at the same time, publicize the risks of increased student stratification.

Even apart from the negative effect of increased segregation, justifying federal advocacy of charter school expansion is difficult when there's no evidence that charter schools, on average, are academically superior to traditional public schools or even that they can be more innovative given the Common Core State Standards and the testing associated with them.

The finding in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that "separate education facilities are inherently unequal" has been demonstrated repeatedly in the United States and throughout the world in the 60 years since that decision. It also has been demonstrated in the results of the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2010). It is ironic that the political rhetoric surrounding this assessment focuses almost exclusively on test-score differences *among* countries, which account for only about 11% of the variance, while little attention is paid to the far more important finding that the remaining variance is accounted for by differences *within* countries. On average, almost 60% of the differences in reading test scores within member countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development are explained by the SES of students and schools. In the United States, the

SES of students and schools explains almost 80% of the variance in performance. That finding is certainly not a strong recommendation for policies that further increase the segregation of schools.

It is also ironic that as other countries become increasingly concerned about the social implications of their school choice programs the United States is promoting the expansion of these programs. Until now, the link between charter schools and segregation has been partially masked by the fact that a large proportion of charter schools are in urban areas that are already highly segregated. However, as charter schools expand into areas with more diverse student bodies, their segregating effects will become even more extensive and visible. That expansion already is under way; although the largest increases in charter schools to date have occurred in cities, significant increases are also occurring in towns, suburbs, and rural areas that are more diverse (Landauer-Menchik, 2006; National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2013b).

It is not that government has an agenda to increase segregation. Proponents of charter schools believe they're giving low-income and minority students opportunities they otherwise would not have had. That belief is true in some cases; all charter schools do not result in segregation. But far too many do, and the trend is unfavorable. It takes a lot of care through targeted funding and oversight to mitigate the pressures that lead to yet more segregation. But whatever motivations drive the choices families and schools make, it is important that government does not exacerbate the problem of segregation by ignoring the unintended consequences of its policies. The risk is an increasingly divided public education system.

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READING 37

High-Stakes Testing Hasn't Brought Education Gains

Judith Browne Dianis, John H. Jackson, and Pedro Noguera

This reading by Judith Browne Dianis, John H. Jackson, and Pedro Noguera is a brief response to major national civil rights organizations that are encouraging parents to have their children take the annual standardized tests given by the schools in response to state mandates. Instead, they argue that parents should choose to opt out of such testing. Their reasoning is that such high-stakes testing hasn't reduced inequality in schools and may even be exacerbating injustice.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What do the authors mean by "children cannot be tested out of poverty"?
2. What arguments do the authors give to oppose standardized testing?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the reasons the authors present that parents of disadvantaged and children of color should opt out of standardized testing for their children?

In recent weeks, a few national civil rights organizations including the National Council of La Raza, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the League of United Latin American Citizens, and National Urban League have vocally opposed efforts to highlight the dangers of high-stakes testing by students and parents opting out of annual assessments. Uniting under the banner of the Washington, D.C.–based Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, these groups are urging parents to comply with annual testing requirements. We strongly disagree with their position.

From "High Stakes Testing Hasn't Brought Education Gains," by J. Browne Dianis, J. H. Jackson, and P. Noguera, *Phi Delta Kappan*, 97(1), pp. 35–37. Copyright 2015 by Phi Delta Kappa International. Reprinted with permission.

Data from these annual assessments are not a reasonable proxy for educational opportunity and equity. African-American and Latino students are more likely to be suspended, expelled, or pushed out of school regardless of their performance on state tests, and, despite some improvement in graduation rates, significant disparities remain.

Moreover, of all the topics that could be addressed as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is considered for reauthorization, why defend a policy that has proven generally ineffective in advancing the educational interests of children of color and disadvantaged children? Schools serving poor children and children of color remain underfunded and have been labeled "failing," while little has been done at the local, state or federal level to effectively intervene and provide support. In the face of clear evidence that children of color are more likely to be subjected to overtesting and a narrowing of curriculum in the name of test preparation, it is perplexing that civil rights groups are promoting annual tests.

Why should wealthy parents be able to opt out of the overtesting by sending their children to private schools while disadvantaged students are forced to exist in a high-stakes, overtested climate for the sake of producing data that confirm what everyone already knows: Their schools lack the needed supports.

We are not opposed to assessment. Standards and assessments are important for diagnostic purposes. However, too often, the data produced by standardized tests are not made available to teachers until after the school year, making it impossible to use the information to address student needs. When tests are used in this way, they do little more than measure predictable inequities in academic outcomes. Parents have a right to know that there is concrete evidence that their children are learning, but standardized tests do not provide this evidence.

While high-performing countries, wealthy parents, and education experts are calling for more student-centered and deeper learning experiences for their students, the Leadership Council group and others are asking communities to continue the practice of subjecting students to tests that deliver very little in the way of excellence or equity. Parents have a right to demand enriched curricula that include the arts, civics, and lab sciences. Parents who are opting out have a right to do so, and they certainly have a right to demand that their children receive more than test-preparation classes that leave them bored and less engaged.

We should remember that the grandfather of NCLB was the original Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), enacted in 1965 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's war on poverty. The measure was designed to compensate for disadvantages in learning opportunities between low-income and middle-class children. While it was never adequately funded, ESEA was envisioned as an antipoverty bill.

We now know students cannot be tested out of poverty. NCLB did take us a step forward by requiring schools to produce evidence that students were learning, but it took us several steps backward when that evidence was reduced to how well a student performed on a standardized test. Most states have long realized that the goals set by NCLB—such as 100% proficiency in reading and math by 2014—could not be achieved. In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education wisely began to allow states to opt out of meeting this unattainable requirement. Why not give parents the right to opt out of tests when they realize states have not done the work of guaranteeing their children are being adequately prepared?

The civil rights movement has always worked to change unjust policies. When 16-year-old Barbara Johns organized a student strike in Prince Edward County, Va., in 1951, leading to *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, she opted out of public school segregation. When Rosa Parks sat down on a bus in Montgomery, Ala., in 1955, she opted out of the system of segregation in public transportation. And as youth and their allies protest throughout the country against police brutality, declaring that "Black Lives Matter," we are reminded that the struggle for justice often forces us to challenge the status quo, even when those fighting to maintain it happen to be elected officials or, in this case, members of the civil rights establishment.

READING 38

Organizing for Success

From Inequality to Quality

Linda Darling-Hammond

Linda Darling-Hammond elaborates on innovative schools, particularly charter schools as discussed in an earlier reading. She brings to this discussion considerable experience working in schools to bring about change for low-income students. This excerpt from her book, The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future, *illustrates what she has found that does and does not work for low-income students in schools. This reading focuses more on the things that work, practices that she and her team of researchers have found to be effective in schools. While she echoes some of the concerns and problems with schools today that Iris C. Rothberg discussed in her reading, this reading offers some structural and organizational changes that can make any school more effective for those students who need it the most.*

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Does Darling-Hammond believe that charter schools are sufficient in and of themselves to provide the innovation we need in the organization of our schools?
2. What suggestions offered by Darling-Hammond do you think would be most effective in changing the type of education we offer to our children?
3. What factors do you think will inhibit change or make the changes she recommends in the structure of schools less likely to occur?

Creating Systems of Successful Schools

Designing schools that serve low-income students of color well is not impossible. Since the groundbreaking research of Ron Edmonds more than 3 decades ago,[1] many studies have documented the practices of unusually effective schools and have uncovered similar features of those that succeed with students who are historically underserved.[2] However, to create such schools on a much wider scale, a new policy environment must be constructed that routinely encourages such schools to be developed and sustained.

From *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future* (pp. 264–277), by L. Darling-Hammond, New York: Teachers College Press. Copyright 2010 by Teachers College Press, Columbia University. Reprinted with permission.

Supporting Successful Innovation

Creating new schools and innovations is a great American pastime. Waves of reform producing productive new school designs occurred at the turn of the 20th century when John Dewey, Ella Flagg Young, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, and others were working in Chicago, New York, and other Northern cities, and African American educators such as Anna Julia Cooper, Lucy Laney, and Mary McLeod Bethune were creating schools in the South. A wave of new school designs swept the country in the 1930s and 1940s when the Progressive Education Association helped redesign and study 30 "experimental" high schools that were found, in the famous Eight-Year Study, to perform substantially better than traditional schools in developing high-achieving, intellectually adventurous, socially responsible young people able to succeed in college and in life.[3] Urban school reform movements occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, producing schools such as the Parkway Program in Philadelphia and Central Park East Elementary in New York, for example; and in the 1990s when the impulse for innovation returned once again… .

Despite more successful and more equitable outcomes than most traditional schools, few of these innovative schools were sustained over time. Any educator who has been in the field for any period of time has participated in what former Seattle teacher union leader, Roger Erskine, has dubbed "random acts of innovation"[4] that have come and gone, regardless of their success. Generally, this is because, like bank voles and wolf spiders, urban districts often eat their young. Changes in superintendents and school boards create swings in policies, including efforts to standardize instruction, go "back to the basics," and bring innovators to heel. Even when they achieve better outcomes, distinctive school models confront long-standing traditions, standard operating procedures, and expectations, including, sometimes, the expectation that the students who have traditionally failed should continue to do so, so that the traditionally advantaged can continue in their position of privilege. Indeed, Anna Julia Cooper's progressive M Street School in segregated Washington, D.C., which offered a "thinking curriculum" to Black students and outperformed two of the three White high schools in the city, was attacked for both of these reasons in the early 20th century.[5]

Sometimes, successful schools and programs fade because special foundation or government money has dried up, and the district does not have the foresight or wherewithal to preserve what is working. Other times, the

challenges of replenishing the capable, dynamic teachers and leaders who have created a successful school prove too great to sustain the model. Historian Lawrence Cremin argued that the successes of progressive education reforms did not spread widely because such practice required "infinitely skilled teachers" who were never prepared in sufficient numbers to sustain these more complex forms of teaching and schooling.[6]

New York City's unusual renaissance was facilitated by the creation of an innovation silo in the form of the Alternative Schools Superintendency—which buffered schools from many regulations and forged new solutions to old bureaucratic problems, and by a rich array of professional resources in support of reforms, including expert practitioners who created networks of learning and support, a large set of public and private universities offering expertise and intellectual resources, and philanthropists and researchers who provided additional professional and political support to these efforts. The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) ran its own Teachers Center, and many of the teachers active in this professional development were involved in the new schools initiatives. Over time, the UFT incorporated many supports for reform-oriented schools into its contracts—first through waivers and later through changes in collective bargaining agreements—and, in some cases, became part of the protection for further reforms. Even when frequent changes in leadership might have led to abandonment of the new schools initiative, these forces kept the reform momentum going.

In most places, however, the lack of investment in professional education that would allow teachers and school leaders to acquire the knowledge they need to undertake sophisticated practices has proved to be an ongoing problem. Another recurring problem is the lack of policy development that could encourage the growth of such schools rather than keeping them as exceptions, on waiver, and at the margins… .

In the current environment, some, including Hill,[7] suggest that charters, contract schools, or performance schools that are essentially licensed by school boards to provide a particular model or approach may provide a way to spark innovation and protect it from the vicissitudes of district politics and changes of course. This strategy has the potential virtue of enabling continuity of educational direction and philosophy within schools —where, arguably, coherence is most important—and holding schools accountable for results, rather than for bureaucratic compliance.

Certainly, some important new school models have been launched through charters. In California, where the state has used chartering as a major lever for innovation, three of the five high schools we studied—Animo, Leadership, and New Tech—were charters. This allowed them to outline a specific approach to education and hold onto it, without being buffeted by changing district views or intruded upon by curriculum, testing, and management mandates. Although collective bargaining agreements from the industrial era often create cumbersome constraints in many districts, new approaches to bargaining have also begun to emerge, and two of these three charters employ unionized teachers.

Many other successful new small school models have been started and expanded through special arrangements for autonomy from district regulations or through charter organizations. Some, like Envision Schools, Asia Society, High Tech High, Uncommon Schools, and others, have introduced substantially new educational approaches, including performance assessments, exhibitions of learning, curriculum focused on global understandings, advisory systems, and more. Odds are that, within many districts, without formal protection,

their adventurousness would have been quashed by some school board or superintendent's insistence on introducing a new standardized curriculum or testing system, or pressuring the schools to grow in size and revert to factory-model designs, or requiring the hiring of teachers or leaders who are not prepared for or bought into the model. (Both district practices of centralized assignment and collective bargaining agreements that require seniority transfers can be culpable in this problem.) Even when there are good intentions to support innovation, local districts are subject to a geological dig of laws, regulations, precedents, and standard operating procedures that can be enormously difficult to untangle before they strangle change efforts.

For these reasons and others, Hill suggests an entirely new role for school districts as managers of a portfolio of relatively autonomous schools, rather than as school operators:

> Today, boards oversee a central bureaucracy which owns and operates all the schools in a given district. It is time to retire this "command-and-control" system and replace it with a new model: portfolio management. In this new system, school boards would manage a diverse array of schools, some run by the school district and others by independent organizations, each designed to meet the different needs of students. Like investors with diversified portfolios of stocks and bonds, school boards would closely manage their community's portfolio of educational service offerings, divesting less productive schools and adding more promising ones. If existing schools do not serve students well, boards would experiment with promising new approaches to find ones that work.

This notion of a portfolio of schools—also advocated by the Gates Foundation—has many potential virtues to recommend it. Certainly, choice is better than coercion in the management of education. Students and families could find better fits with their interests and philosophies, and make a greater commitment to schools they have chosen. Choice could make schools more accountable and attentive to student needs. Schools that create successful designs should benefit from more autonomy to refine and maintain their good work. If a portfolio strategy works well it should "ensure a supply of quality school options that reflects a community's needs, interests, and assets … and [ensure] that every student has access to high-quality schools that prepare them for further learning, work, and citizenship."[8] A portfolio structure is essentially what has emerged in New York City within the regular district structure (now divided into sets of school zones and networks) and, on a smaller scale, in Boston, which has launched a set of Pilot Schools—alternatives that provide a variety of educational options sharing the features described earlier in this chapter, which are succeeding at rates far above those of many other schools serving similar students.[9]

However, neither choice nor charters alone is a panacea. And not all innovations are useful ones. Although some public schools of choice have been successful, others have made little difference. For example, a recent evaluation of Chicago's Renaissance 2010 initiative, which replaced a group of low-performing schools with charters and other autonomous schools of choice run by entrepreneurs and the district, found that the achievement of students in the new schools was no different from that of a matched comparison group of students in the old schools they had left, and both groups continued to be very low-performing.[10]

Results for charters nationally have also been mixed. Reviews of the evidence have found positive impacts in some places and insignificant or negative impacts in others.[11]

A study of 16 states, covering 70% of all charter schools, found that only 17% of charters produced academic gains that were significantly better than traditional public schools serving demographically similar students, while 37[%] performed worse than their traditional public school counterparts, and 46% showed no difference from district-run public schools. The fact that outcomes differ across states suggests that different approaches to regulation and funding may be important. For example, in Ohio, where an unregulated market strategy created a huge range of for-profit and nonprofit providers with few public safeguards, charter school students were found to achieve at consistently lower levels than their demographically similar public school counterparts. Studies have also found lower average performance for charter students in the poorly regulated charter sectors in Washington, D.C., and Arizona, where charters can be granted for 15 years and fewer safeguards for students are required.[12] …

[T]he pressures under recent accountability regimes to get test scores up have led to growing concerns that some new schools—charters and otherwise—have sought to exclude those students who are the most challenging to teach, either by structuring admissions so that low-achieving students and those with special education or other needs are unlikely to be admitted, or by creating conditions under which such students are encouraged to leave. Studies of new schools created in New York City after 2000, for example, have found that these schools, unlike the earlier pioneers, enrolled more academically able students and fewer English language learners or students with disabilities than the large comprehensive schools they replaced. This enabled them to show better outcomes.[13]

Thus, it is not the governance mechanism or the degree of autonomy alone that determines whether schools will succeed. In places where new school models and redesigned schools have done well without ignoring or pushing out struggling students, attention has been paid both to sparking new educational possibilities and building schools' capacities for good instruction, and to removing unnecessary constraints and creating appropriate safeguards for students.

Sustaining Change

The goal, ultimately, is not just to support a vanguard group of unique schools, but to enable all schools to adopt practices that will be more successful for all of their students. For this to happen, districts must find ways to foster innovation and responsiveness without compromising equity, access, and the public purpose of schools to prepare citizens who can live, work, and contribute to a common democratic society. This will require redesigning districts as well as schools, rethinking regulations and collective bargaining, while building capacity and allocating resources in smarter and more equitable ways.

Redesigning Districts

For successful schools to become the norm, districts must move beyond the pursuit of an array of ad hoc initiatives managed by exception to fundamental changes in district operations and policy. Throughout the

20th century most urban districts adopted increasingly bureaucratic approaches to managing schools. They created extensive rules to manage every aspect of school life—from curriculum, instruction, and testing to hiring, purchasing, and facilities—along with complex, departmentalized structures to manage these rules and procedures. Siloed bureaucrats have had the mission of administering procedures that often get in the way of practitioners' instructional efforts, rather than managing quality by being accountable for figuring out ways to support success. To create a new paradigm, the role of the district must shift

- From enforcing procedures to building school capacity
- From managing compliance to managing improvement
- From rewarding staff for following orders and "doing things right" to rewarding staff for getting results by "doing the right things"
- From rationing educational opportunities to expanding successful programs
- From ignoring (and compounding) failure in schools serving the least powerful to reallocating resources to ensure their success

To a large extent, these changes represent a switch from bureaucratic accountability—that is, hierarchical systems that pass down decisions and hold employees accountable for following the rules, whether or not they are effective—to professional accountability—that is, knowledge-based systems that help build capacity in schools for doing the work well, and hold people accountable for using professional practices that enable student success.

In a new paradigm, the design of the district office should also evolve from a set of silos that rarely interact with one another to a team structure that can integrate efforts across areas such as personnel, professional development, curriculum and instruction, and evaluation, with the goal of creating greater capacity in a more integrated fashion. These supports should include

- Recruiting a pool of well-prepared teachers and leaders from which schools can choose—and building pipelines to facilitate their training and availability
- Organizing access to high-quality, sustained professional development and resources, including skilled instructional mentors and coaches that schools can call upon and that can be deployed to diagnose problems and support improvements in schools that are struggling
- Ensuring that high-quality instructional resources—curriculum materials, books, computers, and texts—are available
- Providing services, such as purchasing and facilities maintenance, to school consumers in effective and efficient ways—if schools choose to acquire them from the district

If they incorporate choice, districts will need to ensure that all schools are worth choosing and that all students have access to good schools. This means they must continuously evaluate how schools are doing, seeking to learn from successful schools and to support improvements in struggling schools by ensuring that these schools secure strong leadership and excellent teachers, and are supported in adopting successful program strategies. Districts will need to become learning organizations themselves—developing their capacity to investigate and learn from innovations in order to leverage productive strategies, and developing their capacity

to support successful change. Where good schools and programs are oversubscribed, districts will have to learn how to spread good models rather than rationing them, and where schools are failing, they will need to learn how to diagnose, address problems, and invest resources to improve them. These capacities are needed in all systems, whether or not they adopt choice strategies.

If education is to serve the public good, it is critical to guard against the emergence of a privatized system in which schools are separated by their ability to choose their students, rather than by the ability of students and families to choose their schools. For choice to work, districts must not only provide information and transportation to parents; they must also manage parents' and schools' choices so that schools recruit and admit students without regard to race, class, or prior academic achievement, both to preserve the possibilities for integrated, common schools and to ensure that some schools do not become enclaves of privilege while others remain dumping grounds. Managed choice arrangements in cities such as Cambridge, Massachusetts, and (in some eras) New York City have created strategies for doing this, allowing parents to state several preferences and requiring schools to admit a diverse student body from all parts of the achievement range. However, these districts have also learned that such strategies require constant vigilance and are not by themselves enough to guarantee access to quality schools for all students. In particular, without the right support and incentives, many schools will seek to recruit the most advantaged students and deflect or push out the least advantaged ones. These incentives, as I discuss below, have to do with the level of capacity to serve students well, with resources, and with accountability measures.

Building Professional Capacity

[B]uilding professional capacity ultimately requires investments in effective preparation, hiring, mentoring, evaluation, and professional development for school leaders, as well as teachers and other staff. In addition, systems need to develop strategies for sharing good practice across schools, ranging from research that is widely disseminated to the establishment of networks of schools, teachers, and principals that develop and share practice with one another, to the creation of strategies such as school quality reviews that allow educators to examine one another's practice and get feedback that can help them grow.

Growing successful new schools or improving existing ones is not likely to be accomplished merely by a replication strategy in which external agents seek to transplant programs or designs from one school into another. Replication efforts have an inglorious history, largely because they quickly run up against differences in staff knowledge and capacity resources, and contexts of receiving schools. Unless they are accompanied by intensive, long-term professional development support, schools can rarely attend to the nuances and implications of new strategies in ways that would permit strong implementation over the long run. When the purportedly effective techniques don't work immediately, especially for students who are challenging to teach, staff will tend to revert to old approaches and/or focus on reaching those who are easiest to teach given what teachers already know how to do and have the resources to support.

Another approach was used to achieve the surprisingly consistent and sophisticated practices we found across the Coalition Campus Schools we studied, which allowed them to be successful with normally low-achieving students. Following what might be called a birthing and parenting strategy, many of the new school

"launchers" had been teachers in the older, successful schools. They were mentored by expert veteran principals and teachers while belonging to a set of networks that facilitated ongoing sharing of practice and supported problem solving.

Networking strategies have increasingly been found to be powerful for sharing practitioner knowledge. Teacher-to-teacher networks such as the National Writing Project help teachers develop effective pedagogical practices; principal networks have become critically important within many districts seeking to support stronger instructional leadership and create opportunities for shared problem solving; and, in both the United States and abroad … , school networks are enabling educators to share departmental and schoolwide practices through collective professional development, observational visits, and pooling of intellectual resources.

Managing and Allocating Resources

For schools to succeed with all students, they also must be adequately resourced to do so. As we have seen, disparities in funding between states, districts, and schools often leave those working with the neediest students with the fewest resources. States can begin to change this by costing out what would be required to provide an adequate education to graduate all students, having met the state standards, and then allocating resources equitably to each student on a per pupil basis adjusted for regional cost-of-living differentials and pupil needs. The weighted student formula approach, advocated by many school finance reformers and adopted in some cities to equalize within-district funding, is intended to provide an added increment for students with disabilities, new English language learners, and low-income students, determined by estimating the costs of educating these students to the state's standards. Schools serving large concentrations of high-need students would receive additional funds to provide the services that so many of their students require.

Schools and districts also need the flexibility to spend their funds in optimal ways. Among the distinctive features of successful, redesigned schools is the fact that they use the resources of people and time very differently from traditional systems in order to provide more intense relationships between adults and students and to ensure collaborative planning and learning time for teachers, as schools in other nations do. [T]he United States spends much less of its educational budget on classroom instruction and on teachers—just over 50%, as compared to 70 to 80% in other countries.[14] This weakens instruction.

In part, this is because the United States spends more on several layers of bureaucracy between the state and the school, made necessary in part by the dizzying array of federal and state categorical programs schools are expected to manage because they are not trusted to make good decisions about resources. These categorical programs themselves create inefficiencies in spending, requiring administrative attention and audit trails, as well as fragmenting programs and efforts in schools in ways that undermine educational outcomes. Often, these programs and other regulations prescribe staffing patterns and other uses of resources that reduce focus and effectiveness.

In addition, the United States spends more of its personnel budget on a variety of administrative staff and instructional aides rather than on teachers directly, implementing the outdated model that added a variety of pull-out programs and peripheral services to make up for the failures of a factory-model system, rather than

investing in the instructional core of expert teachers given time to work productively with students whom they know well. Thus, whereas full-time teachers engaged in instruction comprise about 70 to 80% of education employees in most Asian and European nations, they are only about half of education employees in the United States.[15] In 2003, for example, whereas only 51% of school district employees in the United States were classroom teachers, the proportion of full-time classroom teachers in Japanese schools was 89% of all educational staff. The proportion is 72% of all employees, if one also includes the large number of doctors, dentists, and pharmacists who are based in Japanese schools.[16] … Indeed, Japanese schools had, proportionately, as many doctors as there were instructional aides in U.S. schools, but only one-third the proportion of administrative staff.

Successful, redesigned schools often invest more of their resources in classroom teachers and organize teachers in teams that share students over longer periods of time, to create more sharing of knowledge, as well as to focus on accountability for student needs and success. They consolidate their resources to offer a strong, common core curriculum and key supports, resisting the temptation to diffuse their energies or spend on peripherals at the expense of the central goals of the school. The implications for staffing patterns, resource allocations, and the uses of teachers' and students' time are even more distinctive for schools that engage students in extended internships outside the school, as the Met and its network of schools do; for schools that are engaging students in a range of college courses while they are in high school; and for schools that are embracing technology-based approaches to project work as the New Tech network of schools does.

States and districts will need to encourage more thoughtful and inventive uses of resources by resisting the temptation to prescribe old factory-model requirements for staffing and uses of time and funds, and by providing supports for school leaders to learn how to design organizations that use resources in ways that are likely to produce the desired outcomes.

Deregulating Strategically

As I have suggested, a challenge in scaling up more effective school designs is that the century-old model of school organization that has shaped most schools is now reinforced by layers of regulations that often do not produce the most effective forms of education. Most state regulatory frameworks for schools have not yet shifted to accommodate or encourage the design choices made by new school models.

Where innovations are made possible by relief from regulations, they cannot spread unless the same regulatory relief is applied to other parts of the system. Few states have examined ways to deregulate public schools strategically in ways that would permit greater focus and success while preserving core public values. In recent years, as charters and other relatively autonomous schools have been created to permit flexibility in one part of the system, heavy-handed regulation has often increased in the remainder of the system.

The Boston Pilot Schools and the New York City alternative schools are proof that large public organizations can create organizational firewalls that allow space for successful innovation. But to do so, they must always be conscious of the impact of their policies on school-level practice, and they must, over time, allow innovators to help change the rules as well as avoid them. Regulations protecting access and providing equitable allocations

of resources should provide the foundation of a redesigned system, while professional standards and investments in professional capacity that allow educators to be trusted should replace efforts to micromanage teaching and the design of schools.

Changing Contracts

Over time, many of the features of the factory model have been incorporated into collective bargaining agreements by both unions and school boards. Among the most problematic aspects for school reforms are constraints on how time and work are structured and procedures for faculty hiring and assignment that have assumed, in the assembly-line era, that teachers are interchangeable parts.

The success of schools committed to a set of educational principles depends on their ability to hire faculty who believe in those principles and have the capacity to enact them. Thus, centralized assignments of teachers can be a problem, whether in the initial hiring of teachers or due to seniority transfers that give teachers rights to transfer into schools where their skills and philosophy may not fit. Some districts have begun to change these traditions by taking on the responsibility to build a strong pool of well- prepared personnel from which schools can then recruit, and by placing teachers who want to transfer schools into this pool when openings are available, with rights to an early interview but not to placement in a specific school.

In New York, for example, the new school development process triggered important system reforms, including in the key area of selecting teachers. With the cooperation of the Board of Education, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and the CCS Project negotiated a process for selecting staff in which a committee of teachers reviews resumes, interviews prospective candidates—and often observes them teaching or planning collaboratively—and selects those most qualified for the available positions. Where teachers are equally qualified, seniority is the decisive variable. UFT representatives participated in these hiring committees, and were so pleased with the outcomes that the union introduced the process into contract negotiations and recommended its adoption more broadly. The contract now includes a peer selection process for teachers in all nontraditional schools, illustrating how innovation can be used as a lever to transform system policies.

In addition, in any New York school where 55% of teachers vote to do so, the school can trigger a School-Based Option that relieves it from many contract constraints and allows new arrangements to be substituted. Many innovative schools have created their own contracts for teachers which, for example, may recognize teachers' roles as advisors and acknowledge different uses of time during the day and week in return for smaller pupil loads and greater autonomy.

Rethinking Accountability

Finally, policymakers must learn new ways to manage the tension between fostering innovation and holding schools accountable to the other purposes of public education—equity, access, development of citizenship, and progress in learning. One critical aspect of the state's role is to ascertain that students are being adequately taught to become productive citizens of society. In recent years, accountability in the United States has largely come to mean tracking test scores on increasingly limited measures, rather than ensuring access to adequate

and equitable learning opportunities and the achievement of a broader set of outcomes. As we have seen, the allocation of sanctions to schools based on these high-stakes measures also creates disincentives for schools to admit and keep the neediest students.

Some states, such as Nebraska and Rhode Island, have allowed schools to develop and implement broader, more ambitious assessments of student learning that are approved by the state and examined for accountability purposes along with other documented student outcomes. In New York, 31 schools in the Performance Standards Consortium, including many of those we studied, have developed their own graduation portfolio of challenging research papers and exhibitions. This collection of required products treats both academic outcomes and civic and social responsibility—the latter demonstrated through community service and contributions to the school—and is approved for use in lieu of some of the New York State Regents examinations, with the expectation that schools also track evidence of college admission and completion.

In the long run, accountability systems that provide the right incentives for school quality and equity will need to examine student growth and school progress on a range of high-quality measures, not just their status at a moment in time on one limited measure, include evidence of students' opportunities to learn as well as their outcomes, and enforce professional standards of practice that assure parents their children will be well taught, not just well tested.

Conclusion

A growing number of schools have disrupted the status quo by providing opportunities for low-income students of color to become critical thinkers and leaders for the future. Unless policy systems change, however, these schools will remain anomalies, rather than harbingers of the future. Creating a system that supports the learning of all students is not impossible. It will take clarity of vision and purposeful, consistent action to create a web of supportive, mutually reinforcing elements. In particular, dismantling the institutionalized inequities that feed the racial, socioeconomic, and linguistic achievement gap will require substantive policy changes in redesigning schools, developing teachers and principals, expanding our conceptions of curriculum and assessment, rethinking funding strategies, and reconceptualizing accountability.

Notes

1. Edmonds (1979).

2. For a review, see Levine & Lezotte (1990).

3. Eight-year study.

4. Erskine (2002).

5. Robinson (1984).

6. Cremin (1961).

7. Hill (2006).

8. Gates Foundation (2005), p. 3.

9. French (2008).

10. Young et al. (2009).

11. Imberman (2007); Miron & Nelson (2001), p. 36.

12. Carnoy, Jacobsen, Mishel, & Rothstein (2005).

13. Advocates for Children (2002).

14. Darling-Hammond (1997); NCTAF (1996).

15. NCTAF (1996).

16. Japanese statistics are for elementary and lower secondary schools, as reported in Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (2004); U.S. statistics are from National Center for Education Statistics (2005), Table 79.

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Projects for Further Exploration

1. Find the school report cards for three school districts in your area (one from a rural area, one from a suburban area, and one from an urban area) and compare the data for each district on factors such as graduation rate, student achievement, percentage of students going on to college, and racial composition.
2. Using an academic database, look for the most recent studies on charter schools and compare the findings from these studies to those presented in the readings in this chapter. Are they working to alleviate inequality, and are they innovative?
3. Read your local newspaper for articles about education and schools, paying particular attention to political dimensions of the issues discussed in this chapter. Can you tell if those articles are coming from conservative or liberal political groups? Who is being blamed in the articles for the problems in our schools?

Chapter 9 Higher Education

Educational systems provide knowledge and skills, from basic literacy to professional training. Within most countries, *higher* education is part of the system that provides advanced content knowledge and specialized professional and vocational preparation. In this chapter, we examine various issues faced by the system of higher education and some of the experiences students have within them. Some of these issues are similar to those at other levels of education—pressures from the environment for external funding, demands from businesses and communities, negotiating roles and relationships, interactions between students and teachers, and the role of higher education in reproducing social inequality.

With more and more students seeking postsecondary education, higher education has become an important part of the educational system, particularly in the United States. Currently, nearly 70 percent of high school students enroll in some form of postsecondary education after graduation. In the United States, higher education institutions vary considerably in terms of cost, size, mission, campus culture, and other dimensions. A brief history of the development of higher education in the United States helps contextualize where we are today. Harvard University, the first institution of higher learning in America, was founded in 1643, followed in 1693 by the College of William and Mary in Virginia. In 1770, there were just nine colleges in colonial America. The growth of colleges during the next 90 years was spotty, with over 700 colleges being founded but failing to survive prior to 1860 (Rudolph, 1990, p. 219). During this period, college enrollments remained small and selective. Colleges were designed to serve the needs of elites, on one hand, offering studies in philosophy, math, and the classics, and aspiring clergy, on the other, with a focus on theology. The vast majority of society neither aspired to a college education nor received one.

Perhaps the first large shift in the structure and function of higher education came in 1862, with the passage of the Morrill Land Grant Acts. With this legislation, the federal government granted 30,000 acres of land to each state, with the expressed purpose of teaching "such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life" (Morrill Act 1862). Accordingly, the act democratized education by opening it up to students beyond the upper classes and by proscribing an education with practical applications, especially in engineering, agriculture, and the sciences. Today, many public institutions with the word "State" in them are a legacy of this act, like Florida State University, Colorado State, Washington State, and many more.

Between 1890 and 1925, enrollments in higher education grew at 4.7 times the rate of growth of the population (Rudolph, 1990, p. 442). Alongside the newly democratized institutions of higher education, many colleges and universities continued to be inhabited by the wealthy, who at that time recognized the advantages of educating their children as a means of distinguishing themselves as a class above the newly arrived immigrants. For the wealthy, however, higher education was not necessarily focused on academics. According to Veysey (1965), the college experience at the end of the 19th century "meant good times, pleasant friendships, and, underneath it all, the expectation of life-long prestige resulting from the degree" (p. 269).

On many campuses, intense peer bonding and an embrace of the "gentlemen C" (earned by investing little in the formal academic side of college) pitted students against their professors (Horowitz, 1987).

Although higher education grew during the late 1800s and early 1900s, many groups remained excluded. Founded in 1833, Oberlin College in Ohio was the first institution to admit both female and Black students. This, however, remained the exception for many years. White women at the time were typically relegated to single-sex institutions, which effectively functioned as "finishing schools," offering a curriculum focused on etiquette and the domestic arts. The elite "Seven Sisters" schools challenged this model, providing women with a liberal arts education comparable to what elite White men received. The first historically Black college, Cheyney University, was founded in Pennsylvania in 1837. Other historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were established throughout the north and south, providing a mix of liberal arts, professional, and practical education. Such schools played a critical role, given that public institutions in many southern states remained racially segregated through the mid-1960s. Today, women represent nearly 60% of all college students while minority students remain underrepresented in higher education, although the gap has closed considerably over time.

The post–Civil War era saw college enrollments increase with new waves of immigration in the 1890s. Looking at higher education as the path toward social mobility, the presence of immigrants further altered the state of affairs at American colleges and universities. The arrival of immigrants with strong academic backgrounds changed the manner in which colleges evaluated applicants (Karabel, 2006). During the first decades of the 20th century, Jewish applicants, in particular, submitted test scores and credentials that were far superior to their native-born peers (usually of British, German, and Dutch descent). Given their strong credentials, such applicants would potentially squeeze out and reduce the number of native-born students on campus. Elite colleges and universities grappled with this possibility and did so within the context of rising anti-Semitism. Colleges and universities like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton responded by changing admissions criteria to de-emphasize academic qualifications and elevate the importance of "character" and accomplishments in athletics, service, and other domains. By altering the basis of evaluation, colleges and universities reasserted the privilege of Americans of Anglo-Saxon descent. They also provided an early lesson in how college admissions are politicized and used as a tool to restrict or open up access.

Another major transformation in American higher education came at the end of World War II with the G.I. Bill, also known as the Serviceman's Readjustment Act. The G.I. Bill was responsible for an enormous increase in the college enrollments, with 2.2 million veterans enrolling in 4-year degree programs by the mid-1950s (and another 5.6 million enrolling in other types of training programs). With a college education fully subsidized by the federal government, the G.I. Bill further democratized the higher education landscape and paved the way for the growth of the middle class that occurred in the 1950s and '60s. Demand for community college education, night schools, and other "nontraditional" forms of higher education also resulted from this act. Community colleges were not only cheaper than residential campuses but could accommodate less prepared students, thus permitting existing colleges and universities to continue to be more selective (Dougherty, 1994).

Today, some observers worry that over time, higher education has become more like a business, treating students as consumers and education as a product that people can buy (Bok, 2009). We now find entire universities online, where students can complete a degree through distance learning, as well as online courses and degree programs offered by traditional brick-and-mortar universities. The increase in the use of distance learning in higher education has led one scholar to call these universities "digital diploma mills" (Noble, 1998). Many of these are *for-profit* institutions, causing some to worry that stockholders have more influence over how these institutions are run than do the students who are enrolled in them (Cottom, 2017). The recent introduction of MOOCs (massive open online courses) by major universities has opened learning opportunities to many individuals who would not otherwise be able to access college courses in elite universities. In both of these cases, campuses are no longer as necessary as they once were. Despite this massive growth in higher education, persistent inequalities remain. Indeed, research shows that the social class gap in college completion has not changed despite 40 years of steady expansion (Sacks, 2007).

Nuanced conversations about equity and higher education demand a move from a focus on enrollments and access to questions about completion and students' experiences on campus. For example, while colleges and universities have become more open to students of color, women, and lower-income students over time, plenty of research shows that inequalities remain. While *access* to higher education may technically exist for these students, full *inclusion* on campus remains elusive. Because success in college requires more than just intelligence, many students who lack financial, social, and cultural capital have a hard time becoming engaged. Accordingly, rates of attrition are especially high for lower-income and minority students. More than 20 years ago, Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) characterized the position of Black students at predominantly White universities as "educational apartheid," alluding to their separate and unequal state. Today, researchers are examining the "microaggressions" faced by many minority students and how these subtle interactional slights compound over time to erode the health, psychological well-being, and academic success of minority students (Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). Meanwhile, some assert that minority-serving institutions fulfill a unique role in our nation's higher education landscape, offering a curriculum that is culturally relevant to many minority students and an environment where they have more opportunity for leadership positions and mentoring relationships (Conrad & Gasman, 2015).

Several readings in this chapter address some of the lingering inequities in higher education. Ann Mullen, for example, explores the complicated and contradictory position of women in higher education. The articles by Janice McCabe and Jenny Stuber do so by exploring the "experiential core" of higher education—"the space between the elaborately studied moments of college entry" (Stevens, Armstrong, & Arum, 2008, p. 131)—where students build friendships and participate in extracurricular activities. Beyond the academic core, these domains are also linked to social inequality, whether because friendships and participation in extracurriculars predict retention and academic success or because they foster the development of social and cultural capital that graduates can use when navigating employment and marriage markets after college.

While this chapter and the readings assembled in it touch on many important issues within higher education, limitations of space mean that other issues receive scant attention. For example, just like the testing and accountability movement in lower levels of education, many systems of higher education must now

demonstrate that their students are learning and/or acquiring useful skills. If they do not, funding may be withheld. This, too, illustrates the complicated pressures within the education environment, echoing the sentiment that colleges and universities are increasingly expected to operate according to business metrics. Additional conversations should be had about how this movement impacts faculty, along with what the dramatic growth of adjunct/non–tenure track faculty means for students' education and the place of education in society. Gaye Tuchman touches on some of these themes in her selection within this chapter.

With respect to conversations about equity and inclusion, compelling conversations are going on about the place of undocumented students in higher education. Students who were brought to the United States as children without legal documentation face many barriers to college entry, especially in terms of financial aid. Movements around the country are bringing attention to this issue and asking questions about how colleges and universities should respond. Finally, higher education is characterized by both pleasures and perils. Colleges and universities are places where students socialize, explore their sexuality, and enjoy collegiate athletics. These diversions are not without their dark side. Binge drinking and sexual assault are high on the agendas of many college administrators, as they consider their moral and legal obligation for creating spaces where students can balance personal development and educational pursuits. Finally, on some campuses, the big business of sports raises fundamental questions about whether the notion of the "scholar-athlete" is myth or reality.

As you can see, institutions of higher education have undergone and will continue to undergo many changes. The growth of private, for-profit institutions of higher education and the flexibility of technology in providing degrees are likely to lead to many more changes. Efforts are also underway to continue providing increased access to historically underrepresented populations and ensuring that higher education remains a legitimate path toward social mobility. This chapter is intended to familiarize you with some of the issues in higher education in the United States today and help you understand how the institution that you are currently attending fits into a history of higher education.

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READING 39

The Unintended Decentering of Teaching and Learning

Gaye Tuchman

In this selection, Gaye Tuchman provides a thoughtful and critical overview of higher education today. Drawing from her book, Wannabe U: Inside the Corporate University *(2009), Tuchman criticizes the changes in higher education, based on conclusions she drew after six years of observations at a university in the United States. Her concerns cover the entire university, including changes in management, values, faculty orientation, and even student expectations and behavior. Tuchman is troubled by the social shift towards looking at education as a private good—one that individuals pay for and benefit from—away from a public good—one that benefits the public at large, and therefore is invested in by state and local governments. It will likely surprise you to view your collegiate experience from this perspective*.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What does it mean to say that the "neoliberal" approach has increasingly come to characterize higher education?
2. Why does Tuchman she argue that the "privatization" of higher education has led to some of the problems with colleges and universities today?
3. What is the effect of the new managerialism on students' collegiate experiences? How do you see it affecting *your* experience?

Once upon a time in a land not so far away, higher education was a public good and state colleges and universities were virtually free. Students paid for books and fees. When a school was far from home, they also paid for room and board. By 1970, admission at some colleges was quite competitive.

From "The Unintended Decentering of Teaching and Learning," by G. Tuchman, *Society*, 48(3), pp. 216–219. Copyright 2011 by Springer Science + Business Media, LLC. Reprinted with permission.

Over the years, I have heard colleagues talk about a golden age, when the City University of New York did not charge tuition—not the 1920s and '30s, when City College was the school of choice for future Nobel laureates, but the 1960s and early '70s, when academically striving and upwardly mobile second-generation Americans headed to City, Brooklyn, Hunter, and Queens Colleges. "I never could have gone to college if Brooklyn weren't free," said one social scientist, who had been reared in a housing project. "Hunter cost $100 in fees and even that was a lot for me," a daughter of Latino immigrants told me. Each emphasized that she was able to go to college because the City University of New York did not charge tuition.

The financing of higher education is quite different now; so is the meaning of a college degree. Today, it is defined as a private good. Also, as students' costs have escalated and the state has paid less, there have been serious unintended consequences. Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa (2011) have provided a great service by identifying some of them in *Academically Adrift*. They tell us, "Neoliberal policy makers who have advocated for increased privatization and market-based educational reforms have produced a system that has expanded

opportunity for all. What conservative policy makers have missed, however, is that market-based educational reforms that elevate the role of students as 'consumers' do not necessarily yield improved outcomes in terms of student learning" (2011: 137). Instead, [Arum and Roksa's] data indicate, students spend less time studying and also less time studying alone. At every sort of higher-education institution—selective and nonselective, public and private—they are learning less than students did twenty years ago. Furthermore, the gap between the educational accomplishments of rich and poor undergraduates and also the gulf between those of whites and underrepresented minorities is growing.

I believe that the privatization of higher education explicit in current neoliberal financial arrangements has encouraged educational institutions to imitate corporations, the professoriate to behave like ambitious entrepreneurs (many of whom are often oblivious to the undergraduates populating their classrooms, lecture halls, and labs), and students to act like consumers intent on receiving "elaborate and ever-expanding services" (p. 15). These include dormitory suites with kitchens, mall-like student unions with food courts, as well as fitness centers replete with the latest elliptical exercisers, and even Olympic pools. Additionally, the transformation of higher education has introduced an accountability regime—a politics of surveillance, control, and market management disguising itself as the value-neutral and scientific administration of individuals and organizations. It has not served well either the faculty or the students.

My argument draws on data gathered at the pseudonymous Wannabe University, a rather typical northern flagship university with over 20,000 students where I conducted participant observation for over six years. (I named it Wannabe University, because it satisfies the characteristics listed by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*; to wit, ambition to be a national university, aspirations to increase its national ranking, increased funding of famous faculty and expanded construction, self-identification as an economic engine for its region, a slick advertising campaign about its potential greatness, and dreams of becoming the next Silicon Valley.)

I talked about City University of New York, because its history captures the national pattern. Initially it did not charge tuition and it was the first university system to announce open admission—anyone graduating in the top half of a New York high school could attend a four-year college and any graduate could enroll at a community college. It even committed itself to remediation at all of its campuses; as a result, underprepared students swarmed to CUNY. Initially more whites than underrepresented minorities reaped the benefits, according to David Lavin, Richard Alba and Richard Silberstein's (1981) now classic *Right versus Privilege: The Open University Experiment at the City University of New York*, though the media continued to say that the open admissions policy was aimed at the city's underrepresented minorities. In 1975, when bankruptcy threatened the city, CUNY was forced to abandon its expensive idealistic policies and instead became one of the first universities to adopt the neoliberal policies of expanded admissions, increased tuition, and decreased public funding. (By the new century, it had discontinued remedial programs at the senior campuses.) Public higher education was no longer to be defined as a public good.

Wannabe U has also responded to neoliberal pressures, albeit more subtle ones. Here are two of the many reasons that it has joined the competition to satisfy the student consumerism that is now rampant in higher education. Increasingly, both federal and state governments have turned from financing institutions to

financing students. Although some programs introduced in the 1970s, such as Pell Grants and New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), subsidize the needy rather than the affluent, they nonetheless embody the neoliberal emphasis. By funding students, not institutions, they inadvertently decrease institutional control; [b]luntly, such programs push students to decide where they will spend their tuition dollars and leave colleges to figure out how to attract them. (These programs also regulated how many remedial courses funded students could take and so contributed to the turn of-the-century demise of remedial education at CUNY's senior colleges.) Simultaneously, decreased state financing has forced colleges and universities to raise their own funds, to engage in what (in the book of the same name) Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades (2004) call "academic capitalism." Responding to these and other financial pressures, colleges have constituted themselves as competing brands. Not only does one college play Coca-Cola to another's Pepsi (many colleges' viewbooks include pictures of their gleaming fitness centers as if flaunting their superiority in the latest taste test); but also both Coke and Pepsi will pay a university over $1,000,000 to be the only firm whose soft drinks are sold on campus.

During the past decades, a double movement has been occurring within educational institutions. Teaching matters less. In the late 1930s, when Clark Kerr was studying economics at Berkeley, the professors with the most prestige were the best teachers. After World War II, the expansion of the National Institutes of Health, the establishment of the National Science Foundation, and even the redirection of private foundations to tackle national priorities led higher education to emphasize research. When the American Association of University Professors had pressed for the institution of tenure in 1915, it had intended to protect free speech so as to promote classroom inquiry and debate. By 1960, after the expansion of the funding agencies and universities' identification of research as a revenue stream, tenure had become a reward for the production of scholarship. Today, the professors with the most prestige are the publishers and grant-getters; at some research universities, many faculty members pay so much attention to the prestige garnered by scholarship that they don't even know who the best teachers are. Kerr himself put it this way: "There appears to be a point of no return … after which research, consulting and graduate instruction become so absorbing that faculty efforts can no longer be concentrated on undergraduate instruction as they once were" (quoted in Tobin, 2009: 255). When some major public universities receive as little as 8% of their general fund from their legislature and so must scrounge for monies, teaching is decentered. When most students think that the only purpose of education is to get a diploma that yields a job, students will be "academically adrift," to use Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa's (2011) term, and their learning will be decentered, too.

Like the undergraduates in Arum and Roksa's (2011) study, Wannabe University's students have also come to define college in social and occupational terms rather than as an opportunity to explore intellectual possibilities. One can chart how Wannabe's evolution has affected them. In 1970, Wannabe University was free, too. As costs rose, well-prepared, upper-middle class students left for more prestigious pastures until the state legislature decried the brain drain resulting from Wannabe's identity as a safety school. (As at CUNY, potential applicants seemed to think that since they were paying, they might as well aim for a more selective school. Wan U became the place for good in-state students to go if they couldn't get in elsewhere.) To attract better students, Wannabe U bought them. In the 1990s, it instituted special merit scholarships for salutatorians and valedictorians, though it continued to award funds to those in need. It entered the

"amenities race": it built dormitories with suites; it revised cafeteria menus; it emphasized sports. And, like other higher-education institutions, it pushed its professoriate, especially its science faculty, to accumulate grants and contracts and, as provided by the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, to patent their findings whenever possible. By the 1990s and early twenty-first century, when Wannabe U expressed a serious commitment to the national push for better classroom teaching, its instructors had already responded to the nation's neoliberal emphasis on research. As had professors elsewhere, they had embraced research as the path to professional prestige and personal success. Wan U encouraged them to do so. Especially at the research universities, many scholars looked at undergraduate teaching with condescension. Their employers also encouraged them to do so. Needing money, colleges and universities could not abandon the emphasis on funded research.

A new doctrine of professional responsibility and more detailed merit forms to assess individual accomplishments were among the policies that increased the accountability of tenure-line faculty and encouraged professors to audit themselves. They were to monitor the expansion of the lists of publications and grants on their curriculum vitae much as they weighed themselves in the morning. Even as Wannabe's central administrators initiated programs to increase student retention and graduation rates, it pushed faculty to tackle more funded research. "Non-instructional staff" ran those new programs, not professors. One ex-dean claimed that it was easier to fire non-instructional staff if a program did not work out. Moreover, the academic departments were to attract and create potential revenue streams. (The School of Agriculture taught horseback riding in the summer and even marketed its campus-made ice cream.) Advising one another of the experiences on their end of campus, scientists told humanists, "If you think that the people in the humanities feel pressure, you should see what it's like in the sciences."

At Wan U, as elsewhere, research had trumped teaching. As I describe in *Wannabe U: Inside the Corporate University*, both central administrators and departments placed so much emphasis on scholarship, especially funded research, that sometimes they even construed instructing undergraduates as a punishment. At Wannabe, as elsewhere, professors who do not produce enough scholarship are assigned to teach more courses than their well-published or well-funded colleagues. Four-year colleges mimic the universities. Although their faculties are not expected to devote as much time and effort to scholarship, research matters—both to bring in needed monies and to garner prestige. At such prestigious colleges as Wellesley, Hamilton, and Vassar, publishers are more likely than acclaimed teachers to be distinguished professors and to hold named chairs.

I read the recent histories of both CUNY and Wannabe University, as well as Arum and Roksa's (2011) *Academically Adrift*, as stories about the unintended consequences of neoliberalism. No one had meant the stress on research and consumerism to diminish teaching; but one can trace the processes by which it did so. Neoliberalism encouraged the introduction of corporate management techniques, especially of what Michael Power (1999) has called the new managerialism—an emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness, and economy. In higher education, the new managerialism was to be achieved in part by

- the centralization of authority in the staff of presidents and provosts,
- the introduction of vision statements, mission statements, and business plans ("An academic plan is simply a business plan," one Wannabe president informed "his" faculty),

- an emphasis on hiring non-instructional staff to provide the services that choosy students were demanding, and so the hiring of fewer full-time instructors, and thus
- a shift to at-will instructors who could not even pretend to have a say in the governance of their departments, let alone the university. (Currently only 35% of faculty are tenured (25%) or tenure-track (10%) instructors; the rest, the contingent faculty, are mainly adjuncts who commute from one college to another to earn a meager living.)

The power of the accountability regime helps to explain many professors' disenchantment with teaching. As I describe in Wannabe U, the new managerialism introduced significant changes in work conditions without consulting the professoriate (the workers). Under the guise of investing their assets wisely, deans and central administrators encouraged some forms of research, but not others. They played an increasingly active role in establishing how research should and would be conducted at their institution. Sometimes they assumed the right to define the appropriate parameters of scholarly fields. Small wonder that many full-time professors grew disheartened, almost inert, and that previously peaceful academic departments experienced significant conflict, while departments in which faculty had frequently squabbled were virtually rent asunder. And how are the adjuncts running from job to job supposed to be dedicated to their students and institutions, when many have little contact with one another, let alone their full-time colleagues? When a complex organization consistently pushes each individual worker to achieve for his or her own benefit while it simultaneously seeks status and minimizes the welfare of the collectivity, the very notion of the common good may melt into a puddle and evaporate.

Teaching Suffers

It is difficult to dedicate oneself to teaching students who do not want to take one's course and sometimes make it clear that they don't care a fig about it—though they do care about the grade. (Following the reasoning of the accountability regime, students seem to feel that scoring well on tests is more important than learning.) It is especially difficult to give one's classes a high priority, when one's profession lauds scholarship, not teaching. At Wannabe University, the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL), established in the 1990s, is supposed to address this problem by teaching teachers how to teach, but it cannot make them care. The head of one of the ITL's programs explained a problem he faces. Department heads order faculty who receive poor ratings on student evaluations to go to the institute. "They don't want to be here," he told me. He finds it difficult to help these "faculty-learners" who don't give a fig either. Some professors justify their distrust of the ITL by saying that it is more responsive to the central administration than to the instructors whom the institute supposedly serves.

However, one cannot simply blame colleges, universities, administrators, middle-managers, and professors for the decreased learning that Arum and Roksa (2011) document. When students study less, they learn less. I believe that their retreat from studying, especially studying alone, is a response to contemporary conditions, including the growing schism between the wealthy and everyone else that is associated with the current version of globalization, the mediatization of politics, religion, and daily life, and the commodification that has resulted as increased conformity masquerades as individualization.

Our students' comparatively poor study habits and their dedication to having fun are reminders that they have bought into contemporary norms about what they should be doing. Commodification has taught them to judge others by their possessions. The changing distribution of jobs—and the associated growing schism between the wealthy and the rest of us—has intensified the feeling that they must train to find a stable job. As Philip Kasinitz, Mary Waters, John Mollenkopf, and Jennifer Holdiaway (2008) document in *Inheriting the City: The Children of Immigrants Come of Age*, at CUNY many upwardly mobile second-generation Americans aim for a practical career. So do some Wan U students. Others have no idea why they are in college, except for their conviction that a college degree will somehow bring a good and (with luck) stable job. (Over the past four decades—from the New York City fiscal crisis to the Great Recession—my classrooms have been peopled by a goodly percentage of students who raised their hands when I asked if they know people who were fired in the most recent recession.)

To be sure, these concerns are not new. Earlier generations of upwardly mobile undergraduates sought training. In a bygone era wealthy students attended elite institutions without really knowing why they were there—except, of course, they felt sure that members of their social class were supposed to spend time in college. Many of the undergraduates of yesteryear also dedicated themselves to enjoying what they were certain were the best years of their life—the time without responsibility. But contemporary social conditions, including the expansion of higher education, have exacerbated these themes.

Today's undergraduates are filled with contradictions. They want both social acceptance and private goods.

They want to get through their coursework; they want jobs that pay well, but not the solitary learning necessary to stretch the mind. They want to have fun. They want to be recognized as individuals. They stand at the campus bus stops, cell phone glued to ear, stance announcing that they have a friend to talk with and so are not alone. Like the members of David Riesman's (1950) *Lonely Crowd*, they are most themselves when they are in a group.

The problem facing both educators and policy makers is not simply what has happened to America's higher-education institutions. Rather, colleges and universities cannot be fixed without analyzing what has happened to our youngsters, too. We must reconsider the impact of contemporary neoliberalism and its accountability regime on both students and schools.

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READING 40

Beyond the One-Size-Fits-All College Degree

James Rosenbaum, Kenna Cepa, and Janet Rosenbaum

While education, in general, has long been considered "the great equalizer," higher education in particular has been considered an avenue for social mobility and the pathway to (at least) a middle-class life. On this pathway, community colleges are often considered the most accessible on-ramp. In this selection, James Rosenbaum and his coauthors explore the place of community colleges within the landscape of American higher education. Ultimately, they paint a contradictory picture of community colleges: On the one hand, they have a poor record of facilitating students' completion of a 4-year degree; on the other hand, they can fulfill an important function in providing job training that leads to stable, middle-class employment. They use this finding to question the assumption, often transmitted in high schools by teachers and guidance counselors, that a 4-year degree should be the default aspiration for high school graduates.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Rosenbaum and his coauthors are critical of the "BA blinders" that many people wear. What do you think keeps those "blinders" in place?
2. According to this piece, there are many good jobs that don't require a college degree. To what extent do you think this knowledge would change how many American high school students think about college and the goal of getting a 4-year degree?
3. Beyond the messages sent by high school counselors, what else would need to change in order for young people to aspire to and succeed in vocational or occupational education?

Nearly 90 percent of high school graduates say they will seek a bachelor's degree, according to a 2004 national survey. But only 28 percent of community college students who want to earn a BA will actually get one—and it often takes them six to eight years to do so. Studies show that attending college has little impact on students' earnings unless they obtain a credential. But most students fail to get any credential at all, so they leave community college in debt, and with job prospects that are no better than those who simply graduated from high school.

From "Beyond the One-Size-Fits-All College Degree," by J. Rosenbaum, K. Cepa, and J. Rosenbaum, *Contexts*, 12(1), pp. 48–52. Copyright 2013 by the American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

However, a BA is not the only route to a good job. With soaring college costs and high dropout rates, some argue that college students seeking job preparation would be better off spending their time and money elsewhere. That "elsewhere" could actually be inside colleges.

Community colleges offer short-term certificates and associate degrees that prepare students for specific

occupations. Sociologist Steven Brint, an important critic of such options in the 1980s, has since noted improvements and substantial payoffs in terms of economic rewards and the ability to transfer to four-year colleges. Yet few Americans recognize the value of certificates and associate degrees (AAs). They assume that a four-year BA is the only valuable goal; they have what we call "BA blinders."

In order to understand what young workers value about their jobs, and the value of different college credentials, we examined a national survey of young adults (AddHealth), and interviewed 48 occupational faculty and 65 students in 8 community colleges. Our focus was on the three largest occupational fields in the United States: health, computers, and business. Programs that grant certificates or AAs in these fields provide access to high demand, mid-skilled jobs like computer networker, medical assistant, accounting assistant, and computer-assisted designer.

Labor markets don't work unless students can match jobs with their own qualifications. Occupational programs can facilitate that. Students' choices are "organizationally produced," sociologist Gad Yair notes. Occupational programs shape labor markets by helping students discover job options and rewards they were unaware of, as well as qualifications, interests and abilities they've never experienced, along with new professional role competencies. Such programs provide access to high-demand mid-skilled jobs that require education beyond high school, but less than a bachelor's degree. These mid-skill occupations are vital for society, and they offer status and advancement opportunities. Yet few people know about them. Occupational programs are not necessarily "better" than other community college programs, but they provide a viable alternative to the one-size-fits-all view of college.

More Than High Earnings

Sociologist Burton Clark, writing in 1960, argued that occupational programs "cool out" students' aspirations. However, among adults of all ages, researcher Anthony Carnevale reports that 19 percent of all certificate holders also have AAs and 15 percent have BAs. Occupational programs no longer prevent students from seeking higher degrees; they add interim credentials that yield quick job payoffs on the way to higher degrees. Similarly, occupational programs can be routes to good jobs. Certificate and associate degree graduates in some fields enjoy significantly higher earnings than high school graduates. Although their average earnings are less than BA degree holders, nearly one quarter of certificate graduates earn more than the typical bachelor's degree graduate.

Moreover, earnings alone do not necessarily indicate a "good job." Some employment experts warn that high-paid jobs often have undesirable attributes (the five D's: dangerous, demanding, dead-end, deceptive, and disagreeable) such as unlikely commissions, or unpredictable work shifts. Occupational faculty teach students to be wary of these undesirable attributes, taking into account the value of non-monetary job rewards.

In assessing possible jobs, students tend to focus on earnings potential. Occupational programs help students discover new job options and rewards. Analyzing AddHealth survey data, epidemiologist Janet Rosenbaum found that young working adults, from 25 to 32 years old, report that alternative job rewards such as status, autonomy, career relevance, and career preparation are more strongly related to job satisfaction than earnings are. While BAs provide the greatest rewards, certificates and associate degrees can offer some comparable non-monetary job rewards (even after controls, see table at contexts.org for additional data). Compared with high school graduates, certificate graduates' jobs have significantly higher job status, autonomy, career relevance, and career preparation. In addition, having an AA degree (but not a certificate) leads to increased health and vacation benefits, and jobs that are less likely to require night shifts, irregular hours, or strenuous, repetitive work.

In computer work, for example, graduates earn status and respect when they possess skills that protect vital information and keep basic operations functioning properly. Allied health workers are responsible for people's lives. They may also have advancement opportunities in surgical technology, radiography, and hospital administration jobs.

Certificates and associate degrees provide significant gains in job rewards over high school diplomas. For students who wish to escape dead-end unskilled jobs, these credentials often lead to better jobs in one or two years, and they allow students to accumulate credits towards bachelor's degrees.

Student Qualifications

Community colleges offer training in "college-level academic skills" so that students can eventually transfer to BA programs. Most community colleges compel students to take remedial courses, which are typically high-school-level courses that offer no college credits. Remedial courses are often a dead end. Math remedial success rates hover at 33 percent for most students, and at 17 percent for low-achieving students. Students tend to leave them with no credentials, few payoffs, and new debts.

Although "college-level academic skills" are considered necessary for the BA, they aren't necessary for many jobs or occupational programs—for which students only need ninth-grade skills or less. As one faculty member reported to us, "The math part in business is really basic arithmetic—nothing beyond sixth grade math." Similarly, health and computer jobs require strong arithmetic skills, but only ninth-grade algebra or less. Many employers also report similar needs.

Instead of advanced academic skills, these occupations require other qualifications—such as analytical thinking, technical and soft skills (such as communication, social skills, and task organization), which students learn in occupational programs. Even in technical fields, employers regularly tell faculty, "don't send any more geeks," or "if I can put that person in front of a customer, I'll pay them 40 percent more." To teach both technical and soft skills, health faculty role-play patients, computer classes require projects tailored to clients' needs, and business classes simulate a series of crises which students must learn to analyze and fix. Through group projects, students learn teamwork. As one student says, "I became comfortable talking and interacting with people."

A quick certificate or AA can give students confidence to pursue BAs. Those with certificates or associate degrees said they were likely to pursue higher degrees, and many do so. Occupational programs offer interim credentials and valuable skills that can yield quick job payoffs on the way to higher degrees.

Discovering Interests and Abilities

While colleges expect students to choose programs based on prior interests and abilities, occupational programs help students discover new interests and abilities. In phlebotomy class, students learn to take blood on a rubber arm, and then they practice on one another. As they become confident, a teacher reported, they become like "little vampires," and they bring friends and family members to class, proudly showing off their new skills.

In a three-week accounting project, students do business-related work for a hypothetical company, "and they've got to know all of the formulas to make all that work." In another class, students visit animal shelters to balance the books and conduct audits, applying their new skills. A business student reports, "all my life I've hated math and numbers. I never thought I would eventually develop an … interest for finances… . I'm shocked."

A computer networking class provides a box of electronic components, and students build useful objects, like LED displays and clap-light switches. A part-time faculty member who does computer consulting shows students computer simulations of his work for clients. Students construct websites for customers, or take computers apart and reassemble them, and are so engaged that they are eager to continue their studies.

Occupational programs offer students new occupational options. Many of these students did poorly in high school and were never before engaged in their studies. In these programs, students discover new skills and interests that relate to specific careers. "When you find what you want to do," said one student, "it's kind of overwhelming, how exciting it is."

German apprenticeships are widely admired for preparing 18-year-olds for professional work roles. In the United States, occupational programs similarly transform youth into professionals, creating a structured mix of instruction and work-related tasks where students see good jobs, and where they can assess their qualifications, interests, and abilities, and learn professional roles and standards. After 15 months, formerly immature teenagers are handing scalpels to surgeons. Whenever companies trust that their finances are done correctly, when computer networks are secure, when patients are prepared for surgery, clients depend upon the professional judgment of people with certificates.

Although not as highly paid, these jobs have many attributes of professional jobs, as defined by sociologist Richard Ingersoll: "rigorous training and licensing requirements, clear standards for practice, substantial workplace responsibility, positive working conditions, an active professional organization or association." Faculty report that if students learn professional skills and standards, they will perform roles with responsibility and authority, even in stressful or ambiguous situations.

These occupations entail substantial responsibilities. Computer networks must be secure so that health care organizations and schools are legally compliant, and businesses follow data protection laws. Computer networking professionals not only design systems, but also have responsibility and authority to teach clients how to comply. In the allied health fields, where actions can have life-or-death impact, teachers show students

how to keep operating room equipment sterile "because it's not 'oh well, that is sterile enough.'" In business, many decisions are subject to legal constraints, which professional accounting assistants must know. In small firms, they may be the only employee who knows and understands these standards.

Occupational programs identify new professional roles. Many students, who never before had important work responsibilities, gain new professional identities by learning professional standards, making real-life decisions, and being responsible for important consequences. "I've become a lot more responsible," said one 19-year-old student. Another student spoke of his newly learned time-management skills. After a two-year computer networking program, a 21-year-old graduate reports the thrill of being an expert and having people ask her advice.

Taking Off BA Blinders

Occupational choice has always been difficult, and rapid labor market changes pose even greater challenges today. But policymakers are thinking too narrowly about college degrees. College graduates believe they know what college is, what good jobs are, and what qualifications are needed. Although half of the labor market consists of mid-skill jobs, our BA blinders prevent us from seeing post-secondary options and jobs that do not require bachelor's degrees.

In occupational programs, young adult workers discover that many good jobs may require only certificates or AAs. Contrary to the meritocratic model, which assumes that high-achieving youth choose highly paid jobs, occupational programs conceptualize the labor market in multidimensional ways, valuing jobs in relation to rewards besides earnings, and valuing qualifications in relation to attributes besides simply academic skills.

Although policymakers often view occupational programs narrowly as skills training, such programs also shape students' understanding of labor markets, leading students to make better career choices and also have the option to study for their BAs. Moreover, their new skills may provide advantages even if they change fields. By age 20, students with a certificate can find a responsible job and gain valuable career experience, while pursuing further degrees. Moreover, if they shift fields, employers may value their professional experience, the computer skills of networking technicians, the financial and organizational skills of accounting clerks, or the social skills and calm professionalism of medical workers. Many employers seek these skills.

BA blinders prevent good policy. Many community colleges do not encourage occupational programs, mistakenly assuming that they lead to dead-end credentials and bad jobs. This may have been true 30 years ago, but today such programs often lead to good careers and offer pathways to BAs. Certificates require fewer academic skills, fewer remedial courses, fewer years to complete, and have lower odds of failure. They may also be stepping-stones to a bachelor's degree. Unfortunately, students rarely know about these options, and many drop out with no credentials, little payoff, and heavy debt.

Rather than ask whether every student should attend college, we should ask what type of college they should attend, what credentials they should seek, and in what sequence they should pursue those credentials. But first we must remove our BA blinders, and the one-size-fits-all model of college they support.

READING 41

The Not-So-Pink Ivory Tower

Ann Mullen

While a variety of inequalities persist at all levels of the educational system, perhaps the most systemic change in terms of social inequality has taken place in the realm of gender. As Ann Mullen notes in this piece, 1982 was a turning point when it comes to women's position in higher education. Since then, enrollments have only grown among female students so that today, women represent nearly 60% of all college students. Yet as the old saying goes, "The more things change, the more they stay the same." This piece illustrates that inequalities in higher education are a complex topic, with different types of gender inequalities emerging in terms of who enrolls, where they enroll, and what majors they select once on campus. As noted by Mullen, these inequalities have profound implications for life after college.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What does it mean for the future of American families and places of employment that men are less likely than women to go to college but still have an advantage when it comes to earnings?
2. To what extent should it be a goal for females to enroll in more selective schools or for males and females alike to choose majors that are less gender segregated?
3. How would interviews with high school or college students add to the insights presented in Mullen's article?

Since 1982, women in the United States have been graduating from college at higher rates than men; they currently earn 57 percent of all bachelor's degrees. Some view this trend as a triumphant indicator of gender egalitarianism, while others sound the alarm about the supposed "male crisis" in higher education and the problem of increasingly "feminized" universities.

From "The Not-So-Pink Ivory Tower," by A. Mullen, *Contexts*, 11(4), pp. 34–38. Copyright 2012 by the American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

Recently, the *New York Times* reported that when it comes to college, "women are leaving men in the dust," the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* announced that women's "takeover is complete," and the *Weekly Standard* described colleges as "where the boys aren't." Some have even predicted that sorority sisters will face increasing difficulty finding dates for formals, or eligible men to marry. Thomas Mortenson, a senior scholar at the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, warned that if current trends continue, "the graduation line in 2068 will be all female."

But is higher education really feminizing? Have women's advances come at the cost of men? In 50 years, when they look around their classrooms, will undergraduate students be hard-pressed to see a male face? In other words, has the trend towards gender equality in higher education gone too far? To answer these questions, we need to look beyond the single statistic of the gender distribution of bachelor's degrees, and take a broader

approach to understanding the contours of gender in higher education.

Who's Getting Degrees

During the past 40 years, the gender distribution of bachelor's degrees reversed. In 1970, men earned 57 percent of all degrees; today, women do. This trend leads some to conclude that women are squeezing men out of higher education, and that women's success has led to men's decline. In fact, this zero-sum scenario is incorrect: the college-going rates for both men and women have increased substantially. Both genders are far more likely to graduate from college now than at any previous point in time. Women's increasing graduation rate isn't due to a decrease in the number of graduating male students, but to the fact that women's increases occurred faster than men's.

Particularly between 1970 and 1990, as employment opportunities for women expanded, their college graduation rates grew more rapidly than did those of men.

The rates of growth for men and women have now equalized. Over the past decade, the number of degrees earned by both men and women actually increased by the identical rate of 38 percent. The U.S. Department of Education predicts that over the course of the next decade women's share of bachelor's degrees will rise by only one percentage point, to 58 percent of all degrees. In looking at these figures over time, we see that women's successes did not come at the expense of men, and that the gender gap is not growing uncontrollably. It has in fact stabilized, and has held steady for more than 10 years.

To fully assess the gender distribution of bachelor's degrees, we also need to look at what kinds of men and women graduate from college, and whether men and women of different racial, ethnic and class backgrounds have the same chances of graduating. Among 25- to 29-year-olds, across all racial and ethnic groups, more women than men hold bachelor's degrees. The gap is just over 7 percent among whites and Hispanics, 6 percent among blacks, and about 10 percent for Asians.

But in terms of race and ethnicity, the gaps in college completion far exceed that of gender: 56 percent of Asians between 25 and 29 years old hold bachelor's degrees, compared to only 39 percent of whites, 20 percent of blacks, and nearly 13 percent of Hispanics. Both white and Asian men are far more likely than black or Hispanic students of either gender to earn a bachelor's degree. These racial gaps are actually larger now than they were in the 1960s: while students from all backgrounds are now more likely to graduate from college, the rates have increased more quickly for whites and Asians.

Social class continues to be the strongest predictor of who will attend and graduate from college—one that far outweighs the effects of either gender, or race and ethnicity. Surveys by the U.S. Department of Education show that 70 percent of high school students from wealthy families will enter four-year colleges, compared to only 21 percent of their peers from low-income families. Gender differences also vary by social class background. According to education policy analyst Jackie King, for the wealthiest students, the gender gap actually favors men. (For families in the highest income quartile, men comprise 52 percent of college students, compared to 44 percent in the lowest income quartile, and 47 percent in the middle two quartiles). Age also plays a role: among adults 25 years and older, women are far more likely than men to return to college for a

bachelor's degree. But among those 24 and under, women make up only 55 percent of all students, and the gender difference among enrollment rates for recent high school graduates is small (41 percent of men and 44 percent of women).

In other words, women's overall advantage in earning college degrees is not shared equally among all women. White women, Asian women, and wealthy women outpace women from other backgrounds. Gender differences are largest among students 25 years and up, Asians, and low-income students. But differences in relation to class, race, and ethnicity greatly overshadow gender gaps in degree attainment.

Not at Caltech

In assessing gender equity in higher education, it's also necessary to take into account where men and women earn their degrees. While more women than men tend to graduate from college, women are disproportionately represented in less competitive institutions. Sociologist Jayne Baker and I found that women earned more than 60 percent of degrees in the least selective institutions, but only slightly more than half in the most selective institutions. Women's gains have been greatest at institutions with lower standardized test scores and higher acceptance rates, while men and women are roughly on par with each other at elite institutions. Women are also underrepresented at the top science and engineering institutions, like Caltech and MIT. So, while women may be in the majority overall, their integration into higher education has been uneven, and they are more likely to attend lower status institutions.

Perhaps the most striking disparities are in the choice of college majors. In spite of their overall minority status, men still earn 83 percent of all degrees in engineering, 82 percent in computer and information sciences, 70 percent in philosophy, and 69 percent in economics. Women, on the other hand, continue to earn the lion's share of degrees in traditionally female-dominated fields: 77 percent in psychology, 80 percent in education, and 85 percent in nursing and other health professions. About a third of all men (or women) would have to change majors in order to achieve gender parity across majors today. This hasn't changed much in the last 25 years. (Through the 1970s and early 1980s, fields moved steadily toward becoming more integrated, but in the mid-1980s, this trend slowed and then stalled, shifting very little since then.)

Sociologists Paula England and Su Li found that most of the decrease in segregation came from the growth of gender-integrated fields, like business, and from the flow of women into previously male-dominated fields. Men are much less likely to move into female-dominated fields. They also found that women's entrance into predominantly male fields discourages later cohorts of men from choosing those fields. Women gain status and pay by entering predominantly male fields, while men lose out when they enter devalued, predominantly female fields of study.

Women and men are ostensibly free to select any field they wish, and they no longer face the blatant kinds of barriers to entry that have historically existed. But, other factors influence students' choices subtly, but powerfully. Sociologist Shelly Correll has done innovative experiments with undergraduate students that demonstrate how cultural beliefs about gender shape individuals' career aspirations. When exposed to the idea that men are better at certain tasks, male participants in the study rated their own abilities higher than the women, even though they were all given the same scores. These subjective assessments of their own competencies then influenced students' interest in related careers. Correll argues that widely shared cultural beliefs about gender and different kinds of competencies (like math and science) bias men's and women's perceptions of their own abilities, and their interest in pursuing these fields. She finds that men assess their own capabilities in math more generously than do women, which then encourages them to go into math and science fields.

Education researcher Maria Ong has studied the challenges young women of color majoring in physics face.

Because their bodies do not conform to prevalent images of "ordinary" white, male scientists, their belonging and competence are questioned. To persevere in physics, these women confront the necessity of developing strategies for managing their physical appearance. In my own work, I found that students at an elite liberal arts institution choose majors in order to both carve out intellectual identities and settle on a career path. Students identify with the qualities of knowledge of different fields of study, which they often interpret in gendered ways. Men tend to reject female-dominated fields because of their perceived lack of rigor and objectivity.

Men and women also experience college differently. Education scholar Linda Sax uses 40 years of data about college freshmen, along with research from the 1990s that tracked individual students over time. She found some gender differences that have persisted over the past four decades, such as women's lower levels of academic self-confidence. Among first-year college students, according to Sax, women rate themselves lower than men on three out of four indicators of confidence, in spite of their significantly higher high school grades. In terms of overall intellectual self-confidence, only about half of women consider themselves above average or in the highest 10 percent compared to over two-thirds of men. This gender gap widens even further during the college years.

Because more women than men come from low-income families, women also come to college with greater concerns about financing their education. Women study harder than men during college, spend more time talking with their professors, and get better grades, while men are more likely to miss classes and not complete homework. By focusing only on the relative numbers of men and women at college, we overlook the ways their college experiences diverge, and the different obstacles and challenges they encounter along the way.

After College

Paradoxically, women's success in closing the gender gap in higher education has not closed the gender gaps in the labor market. Men and women still generally work in different kinds of jobs, and women still earn considerably less than men (even with the same levels of education). Occupational segregation remains high and the trend toward narrowing the gender gap in pay has slowed. Currently, young, college-educated, full-time working women can expect to earn only 80 percent of the salaries of men ($40,000 annually compared to $49,800), a ratio identical to that of 1995. In fact, women with bachelor's degrees earn the same as men with associate degrees. Some of this pay gap can be attributed to students' undergraduate fields of study. Engineering graduates, for example, earn about $55,000 annually in their first year after graduation, while education majors bring home only $30,500. However, even after taking into account fields of study, women still earn less than men.

These pay disparities suggest an economic rationale for women's vigorous pursuit of higher education. Not only do women need to acquire more education in order to earn the same salaries as men, they also receive higher returns on their educational investments. Education scholar Laura Perna has found that even though women's salaries are lower than men's, women enjoy a greater pay-off in graduating from college than men do. In the early years after graduating, a woman with a college degree will earn 55 percent more than a woman with a high school degree. For men, that difference is only 17 percent. What's more, men with only a high school education earn a third more than women do, and are more likely to find work in traditionally male blue-collar jobs that offer health care and other benefits—which are not available in the sales and service jobs typically held by women.

Though men with high school educations enjoy higher salaries and better benefits than do women, they are also more vulnerable to unemployment. In general, the rates of unemployment are twice as high for high school graduates as they are for college graduates. They are also slightly higher for men than for women at all educational levels below the bachelor's degree. According to data from a 2010 U.S. Census survey, the unemployment rate for high school graduates was 11.3 percent for men versus 9 percent for women (compared to 4.8 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively, for those with at least a bachelor's degree), due in part to the effects of the recent recession on the manufacturing sector.

In addition to offering access to better jobs, higher salaries, and less risk of unemployment, going to college offers a host of other advantages. College graduates live longer, healthier lives. They are less likely to smoke, drink too much, or suffer from anxiety, depression, obesity, and a variety of illnesses. They are more likely to vote, to volunteer, and to be civically engaged. Because of this broad array of social and economic benefits, we should be concerned about patterns of underepresentation for any group.

Incomplete Integration

To some, the fact that women earn 57 percent of all degrees to men's 43 percent suggests the gender pendulum has swung too far. They claim that if the ratio still favored men, there would be widespread protest. But such claims fail to see the full picture: though women earn more degrees than men, the gender integration of higher education is far from complete. Men and women still diverge in the fields of study they choose, their experiences during college, and the kinds of jobs they get after graduating.

In the early 1970s, when men earned 57 percent of college degrees, women faced exclusion and discrimination in the labor market and earned less than two-thirds of what men earned. Many professions, and most positions of power and authority, were almost completely closed to women. While the ratio of college graduates now favors women, women are not benefiting from more education in ways that men did 40 years ago. In terms of the economic rewards of completing college, women are far from matching men, let alone outpacing them.

By paying exclusive attention to the gender ratio, we tend to overlook much more serious and enduring disparities of social class, race and ethnicity. This lessens our ability to understand how gender advantages vary across groups. If there is a crisis of access to higher education, it is not so much a gender crisis, as one of race and class. Young black and Hispanic men and men from low-income families are among the most disadvantaged, but women from these groups also lag behind their white, Asian, middle-class counterparts. Addressing the formidable racial and economic gaps in college access will improve low-income and minority men's chances far more than closing the gender gap would.

The higher proportion of degrees earned by women does not mean that higher education is feminizing, or that men are getting crowded out. It seems that if women hold an advantage in any area, even a relatively slim one, we jump to the conclusion that it indicates a catastrophe for men. In the case of access to college degrees, that's simply not true.

READING 42

At the Activities Fair

How Class and Culture Matter for Becoming Involved in College

Jenny Stuber

What matters for how students do in life after college—their major, their GPA, or something else? In this selection, Jenny Stuber suggests that participation in extracurricular activities constitutes an important source of stratification after college. Drawing on in-depth interviews with college students—half of them working class and half upper middle class, half at a selective liberal arts college (Benton) and half at a public, flagship university (Big State)—she shows that students from different class backgrounds approach the collegiate curriculum with different cultural orientations and valuable forms of social capital; as they navigate campus life and get involved in an array of extracurricular activities, they acquire additional stocks of cultural and social capital. Meanwhile, working-class students approach college with a more instrumental view and emerge from college having limited participation in their campus's extracurricular domain. Her work contributes to our understanding of social class reproduction in the experiential core of college life.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why, according to Stuber, are differences in cultural orientations and social capital a better explanation for class differences in extracurricular participation than access to time or financial resources?
2. How do your college experiences compare to the students in this article? How do you think your social class has guided your approach to extracurricular participation?
3. How do you think a campus's environment—size, selectivity, and whether it's a residential or commuter school—impacts student participation in extracurricular activities? Do you think there are some types of campuses where class differences in participation would be smaller?

On residential campuses like Big State and Benton College, the pursuit of a degree is about much more than what goes on in the classroom. Indeed, during a given day, about four hours may be spent in class, with another two or three devoted to homework. Assuming that the typical college student sleeps an average of six hours per night—which might be a generous estimate—this leaves eleven hours on weekdays for relaxing, socializing, working for pay, or participating in clubs and organizations. How students spend these eleven hours outside of the classroom is not inconsequential for how they experience college, nor is it inconsequential for their lives after college. It is during these hours that the "social sorting" of college takes place (Armstrong 2008); where, alongside the academic hierarchies of college life, students make friends, form social networks, and take part in social and extracurricular activities through which valuable forms of social and cultural capital flow… .

From *Inside the College Gates: How Class and Culture Matter in Higher Education* (pp. 61–85), by J. M. Stuber.

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In this chapter I turn my attention to the extracurricular realm of college life. I discovered that informal processes play an especially powerful role in shaping students' participation in the extracurriculum. These informal processes, moreover, are strongly structured by social class, as working- and upper-middle-class students arrived on campus with social and cultural resources that differentially impacted their approach to campus involvement.

Student Involvement and the Cultivation of Social and Cultural Capital

… Because the social and cultural resources gained through extracurricular participation may be especially useful within social and occupational settings where one has contact with members of the privileged classes, participation in extracurricular activities has implications for stratification processes in college and beyond. The culture of resume-building is not class neutral, however. Extensive participation in the extracurriculum requires financial capital, as many of these activities cost money and virtually all of them potentially take time away from paid employment. Yet involvement also requires cultural capital, namely in the form of cultural dispositions that define such activities as appropriate, attractive, and feasible. Likewise, the chances of getting involved are further enhanced by the extent to which students have social capital that facilitates their involvement. This social capital functions as a resource by encouraging students to participate, providing knowledge of how to participate, and serving as a meaningful pathway for participation. Because these forms of cultural and social capital are not evenly distributed across the class structure, students who have more of these resources at the beginning of their college careers are better positioned to gain additional resources during their college careers.

Patterns of Working- and Upper-Middle-Class Extracurricular Involvement: Quantitative Results

Consistent with data from a national sample of students at four-year institutions (Walpole 2003), I found that upper-middle-class students had higher rates of extracurricular involvement compared to their working-class counterparts (see Table 42.1)… .

Overall, these quantitative data show that working- and upper-middle-class students participated in the extracurriculum at different rates. Because I conducted interviews with students during their sophomore and junior years, these differences may persist, increase, or decline as students move through their college careers. I use these quantitative differences as a jumping off point to better understand the social and cultural processes that motivated these students' participation in the extracurriculum.

Table 42.1 Social Class and Campus Involvement At-a-Glance

						Greek Membership by Campus		
	Paid Employment	*Internships*	*Academic Year Off-Campus Study*	*January Term Off-Campus Study*	*Greek Membership*	*B.S.*	*B.C.*	*Clubs and Organizations*
Upper-Middle-Class	30% 10 hrs./wk. 4–15 hrs.	42%	24%	73%	79%	65%	94%	3.13
Working-Class	82% 16 hrs./wk. 10–35+ hrs.	32%	14%	21%	36%	7%	64%	2.22

Notes: Data on January Term apply to Benton College, only.

Greek membership is reported as the percentage of students involved in Greek life within my sample. These data are broken down further to represent the percentage of students involved in Greek life on the Big State and Benton College campuses, respectively.

How Social and Cultural Resources Shape Extracurricular Involvement: Qualitative Results

That class differences should emerge in student involvement in extracurriculars is not surprising given the costs associated with participation. Although most extracurricular activities are free of charge, Greek life and off-campus study may run thousands of dollars above regular academic costs; in many cases, internships offer low or no pay, which may be an impossible burden for students who need to work during the summer to cover their educational expenses. Moreover, because all of these activities require some time commitment, time away from paid employment may not be an option for some students. It stands to reason, then, that students who are better able to bear these costs should have higher rates of involvement. Although I show that financial capital either enabled or constrained these students' involvement, this was rarely mentioned in students' discourses of extracurricular involvement. Instead, students' spoke of the ways in which their cultural dispositions—essentially their cultural capital—shaped their understandings of the desirability, feasibility, and utility of extracurricular involvement. The motivation to get involved, however, was facilitated by students' social capital, which typically provided support for and a tangible pathway towards participation.

Class Differences in Students' Cultural Dispositions: The Desirability, Feasibility, and Utility of Becoming Involved

Although colleges and universities make formal efforts to inform students of the extracurricular opportunities available on campus, students' individual and formal dispositions towards these activities played important roles in shaping their involvement. Thus, while most campus activities are technically open to all students, with few formal barriers to participation, students' own cultural resources encouraged or discouraged their participation. The kinds of cultural resources—essentially the kinds of cultural capital—that mattered in this case were students' beliefs about the desirability and utility of cultivating social ties and of having educational experiences that would take them beyond the classroom setting… .

The cultural orientations of upper-middle-class students were so well honed that many of them arrived on campus as first year students *already* involved in one of their campus's clubs, organizations, or programs. Nineteen of these 33 privileged college students arrived on campus prior to the regular academic year as members of Greek organizations, varsity sports teams, residents of living-learning centers, or participants in summer programs geared toward academics or community service. While some of these students mentioned that their parents had encouraged them to enroll in one of the various summer programs after receiving promotional materials in the mail, many of the Big State students who opted into one of these programs said that they also embraced the idea and looked forward to the opportunity to get a head-start on college life. For Kendall Baker, it was the social side of college life that cemented her decision to enroll in Jump-Start, a three-week summer program where she and other incoming students took an intensive three-credit summer course with a specially trained faculty member:

> I went on a campus tour [as a high school senior], and they were like, "You can go to this program

> to meet people." I didn't do it for the credits—I had some college credits from high school—but it was just basically to meet people. And I didn't know of any other way [to do that] than to just move down here. I didn't want to be down here and not know anyone or the campus—cause it's so large —so I just kind of wanted [to] be familiar with everything.

From Kendall's perspective, it was not a desire to become more familiar with college-level academic work that precipitated her early arrival nor was she required to enroll in the program to remediate her academic skills. Rather, she was anxious to begin exploring the social side of college life… .

Students' orientations towards sociability and new experiences also guided their approach to off-campus study. Although off-campus study has increasingly become a centerpiece of the college experience, it is not an activity that appeals to all or is accessible to all. Not only does study abroad require considerable financial resources, it also requires the belief that leaving campus for a semester or the entire academic year will be enjoyable and beneficial. Such was the assumption that many upper-middle-class brought with them to campus. When asked if they had plans to study abroad, many of these privileged students claimed that they had "always" wanted to study abroad. Many of these were students who had traveled extensively with their parents, who thought travel was fun, and looked forward to having experiences where they could test their independence and meet new people. Jordana Lindholm, an upper-middle-class student whose parents owned a small software company, claimed that she was hoping to complete semester abroad in Italy. This desire, it seemed, had its roots in the cultural socialization she received within her family of origin:

> I know that I probably want to study in Italy. I know I'd love to study in Italy because I've been there before. My family went there this summer and traveled all around and I loved it. It's always been a dream of mine to study abroad, or at least since I was little; ever since I can remember I've wanted to go to Rome to study abroad. There's a lot of reasons I could stay on campus all eight semesters and be completely happy, but this is just one of those things that I just don't think I'm going to give up, just 'cause I've always thought about doing it.

When I first met Jordana during the fall of her sophomore year, she was preparing for a three-week January Term to the British Isles, where a Benton faculty member would lead a group of students on an exploration of the local theater traditions. She clearly wanted a deeper off-campus experience though, and spoke of such an opportunity as something to which she had "always" aspired. Jordana's cultural embrace of off-campus study is further illuminated by her comment that it is something she simply does not want to "give up." Through this turn of phrase—uttered by Jordana with an air of entitlement—conveys the impression that off-campus study is the default and that one must opt out of it, rather than into it… .

For working-class students, although limited financial resources surely constrained their sense of the feasibility of activities like off-campus study, their cultural dispositions constrained their sense of its desirability. Many of these students simply did not view this as an inherently fun or enjoyable experience. Although Jodie Brewer signed up for a three-week January Term trip to learn scuba diving in Cozumel, Mexico, she had no interest

in leaving campus for a longer period of time. This poised young woman from a divorced working-class family explained her reasons thusly:

> I have such close ties with my parents and my family and … I don't know, I like to be at a place where I know people and that I know what's going on. I feel like I'm hurting Benton's credentials, or whatever, by not going off campus because they do make such a big deal of it… . It would be great to say, "Yes, I traveled and had this great experience," but I don't know how much it would really help me.

Unlike Jordana and other upper-middle-class students, Jodie did not have extensive travel experience, nor had she spent much time away from her family. She did have, however, what is considered a core feature of working-class culture: a value for staying close to home and maintaining a sense of family solidarity (Dews and Law 1995; Halle 1984; Ryan and Sackrey 1984). Although Jodie was aware of Benton's emphasis on off-campus study, her words illustrate an enduring mismatch between the values officially endorsed by her college and the class socialization and cultural resources she acquired at home and brought with her to campus.

Like Jodie, other working-class students were similarly skeptical of the utility of study abroad. Where one Benton computer science major quipped that he could not "imagine what the advantage would be" for his career goals, a Big State business major simply declared that although it might be a nice "culturalizing [sic] experience" he did not think "it's really necessary." Through such sentiments, these students emphasize the academic side of college life; that is, they focus on the acquisition of human capital while questioning the value of other kinds of experiences. Most upper-middle-class students, by contrast, did not question the alleged benefits of off-campus study; in their accounts, the utility of extracurricular involvement was generally assumed… .

Class Differences in Students' Social Resources: Information About and Social Support for Becoming Involved

Cultural capital does not operate, or function as a useful tool, in a vacuum; it is deployed and has use within particular social contexts. These students' cultural orientations have little value unless they are reinforced by information about how to get involved and social support for doing so. That is, students also need particular social resources in order to put their cultural resources into action. My notion of social resources is similar to other scholars' conception of social capital, but I intend to capture something broader, as well. "Social resources" include sources of information, messages about what one should do about this information, and connections that help put this information into action… .

Social support for campus involvement is something that permeated upper-middle-class students' worlds. This social support seems to float in the ether; transmitted by vague, generalized others. The subtle, yet ever-present nature of this support was evident in the words of Big State's Kyle Kempner, when this lanky business major said: "Everyone always talks about internships. You always hear people talking about like, 'I got this with this company,' or whatever. People are definitely all about doing their resumes." Although the specific

people he heard talking about these internships remained unnamed, Kyle's casual claim that "everyone" talks about this subject conveyed the impression that it was an unquestioned topic within his reference group. Benton College's Carly Beck, an upper-middle-class student who grew up bi-coastally, similarly saw getting an internship as a requisite part of the college experience, much like taking the required courses for one's major: "This year I felt so much pressure to get an internship. It was like, ah, I'm a sophomore, this is what sophomores do! They have to get an internship!" By saying that "everyone" is always talking about their resumes and having an internship is simply what sophomores do, Kyle and Carly show just how normative collegiate involvement is within their circles… .

Participation in internships was also affected by students' class-based social resources. Growing up in a small city in Michigan, with two parents who owned their own high-tech start-up company, Benton College's Jordana Lindholm was encouraged by her parents to pursue internships and community service over paid employment as a high school student.

> My parents never said to me, "Okay, you have to start working now." It was more like, "We don't really want you to start working now, 'cause you don't have to; we can pay for things and that's okay with us. We'd rather you were getting these experiences, because you won't get them when you have to start working." My parents were really good about encouraging that kind of thing.

Although her family's financial resources allowed Jordana to hold unpaid internships two summers in a row, it was their encouragement and their personal connections that helped Jordana convert the family's financial and social capital into other valued forms of capital (cultural capital, for example). Jordana's experience was not unusual among her privileged peers. Of the fourteen upper-middle-class students who had held an internship at the time of the interview, at least ten of them had obtained the internship using personal ties… .

The fact that many of these upper-middle-class students were involved in Greek life seemed to increase the pathways by which they became even more involved in campus activities. Most fraternities and sororities maintain active relationships with alumni—alumni who may be able to provide internships or a place to stay while holding an internship. Current members—colloquially referred to as "brothers" and "sisters"—also served as an occasional source of information about and opportunities for internships. Such was the case with Big State's Kyle Kempner, who received a tip from a fraternity brother that eventually led to an internship with a national orthopedic device manufacturing firm, and Benton College's Austin Murphy, who stayed in the home of a fraternity brother while completing an internship with a real estate investment firm in the Pacific Northwest. Together, these examples highlight the interdependent nature of students' social and cultural resources: While privileged students typically arrived on campus with cultural orientations that motivated their involvement, it was their social capital that allowed them to act upon their motivations.

Working-class students had fewer of these social and cultural resources. Compared to their privileged counterparts, they were less likely to talk about specific sources of information about campus activities, internships, or study abroad. Lacking parents or siblings with extensive college experience (only three of these 28 students had an older sibling with some college education), their intimates were generally unable to provide

personalized advice about college life. These students also had smaller social networks than their upper-middle-class peers—a finding consistent with sociological research on social class and social networks (Campbell et al. 1986; Fischer 1982)—and were more likely to maintain friendships and romantic relationships with people outside of college. For these reasons, their social networks provided little to no information about the extracurriculum. Thus, where "everyone" seemed to be talking about extracurricular involvement among upper-middle-class students, no one seemed to be talking about it among working-class students.

The lack of support for and information about extracurricular involvement was especially clear in my conversations with Big State's Jeff North. An energetic and artistic sophomore, Jeff described himself as intellectually engaged in his double major in philosophy and anthropology. He was, moreover, generally aware of the fact that some students were extending their academic experiences beyond the classroom. He picked up on this from his observations of the poster boards housed within Big State's academic buildings:

> There's all these cool sounding jobs like research assistants and lab assistants and all this stuff and I'm like, "Wow, this sounds kind of cool." And then I look and they're like, "Send resume to blah, blah, blah …" I mean, I don't have a resume. I've never done anything before, you know? I never really heard about resumes too much or anything. I haven't really had anybody talk to me about that kind of stuff—as far as any kind of faculty on campus talking to me about resumes, no one has ever.

It is interesting to note that Jeff expected to hear about resumes from faculty, rather than his peers; he saw that as a formal responsibility of the University. Yet Jeff described his college friends—a mix of working- and lower-middle-class students—as similarly uninformed about and apathetic towards the extracurriculum; the fact that they "don't have anything to put down on their resumes, either" made him "feel better." …

Other working-class students, like Benton's Leslie Wilson, expressed feelings of intimidation when visiting the career center to explore internship possibilities: "I didn't know what to do or what I was looking for, really. I mean, they act like they're … I guess I didn't even know where to begin, and I didn't feel like there was anyone to show me, at all." Although having a negligent advisor or feeling frustrated by career center staff is not restricted to first-generation, working-class students, these students were less likely to have external support from friends or parents to make up for such deficiencies. Because they were relying on campus-based resources rather than personal resources to pursue these options, their frustrations had significant consequences. As such, their comments stand in sharp contract to those of many upper-middle-class students, who were quick to identify personal connections and sources of support that could be used to locate an internship.

Class Differences in Students' Financial Resources

An analysis of class differences in students' participation in the extracurriculum would not be complete without discussing the role of financial resources in constraining or enabling student involvement. Greek life and study abroad can be costly; internships are not always paid and involvement in clubs and organizations

may require time away from paid employment. For privileged students, family financial resources interact with their social and cultural resources to permit them to engage in these activities. Rarely, if ever, did these students mention that they were unable to participate in some kind of activity due to financial limitations; indeed, these students repeatedly said that finances were rarely an issue, given that their parents thought it was "important" for them to participate in various activities… .

In the case of internships, working-class students explicitly mentioned financial factors as a constraint. While all students clearly preferred a paid internship, privileged students were confident that their parents could financially support them—paying for rent and living expenses, for example—if an unpaid internship came along. Less-privileged students, on the other hand, mentioned multiple barriers to participation. Benton College's Tiffany Morrison catalogued her limitations this way:

> I guess if it was in my hometown area, I could probably do it [an unpaid internship]. If it's somewhere else, not going to happen. Because I just don't have the money. My friend did an internship in Washington, D.C., with no pay. I don't have the money to put myself into an apartment … to, you know, have a car to transport me… . So if it was something in like my hometown … or where like my boyfriend lived, where I could like stay with him, that would be possibly feasible… . I can't expect my parents to come pick me up every day.

Yet when it came to study abroad and Greek life, working-class students rarely mentioned financial factors as a limitation. More often, their discourses centered on cultural dispositions in which they defined these activities as undesirable.

While it is clear that financial resources impact extracurricular involvement, with some noteworthy exceptions, neither upper-middle nor working-class students explicitly referenced them when discussing their campus involvement; instead, their discourses drew much more heavily on the role enabling and constraining force of their cultural and social resources.

The Social and Cultural Underpinnings of Campus Involvement

Colleges and universities make formal appeals to all students, inviting them "into the extracurriculum." Yet students' own cultural and social resources impact how they respond to these invitations. For most upper-middle-class students, their university's formal invitations may be unnecessary, given that they are likely to arrive on campus with the presumption that getting involved is a requisite aspect of the college experience and having the social networks that provide support for and information about getting involved. Working-class students, by contrast, were often skeptical of the resume-building culture they encountered on campus—even though some were involved in their high school extracurriculum. Instead, they emphasized the virtues of hard work and questioned whether activities like internships and off-campus study would actually make them better qualified for entering the world of work. Because they tended to be immersed in networks where there was little talk about campus activities, they were less likely to receive the impression that such activities were a normative part of college life. Unlike their privileged peers, they did not receive customized information about when and where they might get involved. These findings, then, suggest one way in which social inequalities are generated on college campuses: in campus settings where extracurricular involvement is a focal point of the college experience, some students arrive on campus with resources that facilitate involvement; in turn, they are able to accumulate more resources that may secure their membership within the privileged classes… .

Reference

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. 2008. Exclusion: Class, gender, and college culture. Culture Workshop, Harvard University Department of Sociology, Cambridge, MA.

READING 43

Friends With Academic Benefits

Janice McCabe

As noted in Chapter 4, educational institutions have both their formal and informal levels of organization, where students learn implicit social lessons alongside explicit social and academic lessons. This piece by Janice McCabe brings these levels together and shows that the social and academic aspects of college life are not necessarily at odds with one another but how they interpenetrate and can be mutually reinforcing. Using both qualitative interview data and quantitative social network analysis, McCabe shows how the shape of a student's friendship network can have powerful consequences for her or his integration into campus life and for students' social and academic well-being.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Of the three network types described in this piece, which do you think most closely fits your friendship network? What do you think are the pros and cons associated with your social network, especially in terms of your academic and career goals?
2. How do you think the formal organization of your campus—whether it is residential and has dorms or is predominantly commuters, whether it has lots of students or relatively few, and so forth—shapes the types of friendship networks students are able to form?
3. In terms of formal organization, can or should colleges and universities develop any initiatives that help students build the most effective types of social networks?

"Sometimes it's a good thing to be like your friends, and sometimes it *isn't*… . If they're getting all As, of course I want to be like them," said Valerie, an 18-year-old college student during her first year at "MU," a large, public, four-year university in the Midwestern United States. Like Valerie, many college students use their friends as academic motivation, finding support among a close-knit group surrounding them. Other students view only *certain* groups of friends as academically helpful. Betsy explained that the friends on her dorm floor constantly help each other with schoolwork, but her friends from home do not. Still others desired more support and encouragement than they received from friends. Steve told me, "I'm doing it myself … I want [help], but at the same time I don't really need it." All three students graduated from MU within four years, yet reflect some of the wide array of experiences students have with their friend networks.

From "Friends With Academic Benefits," by J. McCabe, *Contexts*, 15(3), pp. 22–29. Copyright 2016 by the American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

The new or interesting story isn't just that Valerie, Betsy, and Steve's friends had different social and academic impacts, but that they had various types of friendship networks. My research points to the importance of network structure—that is, the relationships among their friends—for college students' success. Different network structures result from students' experiences—such as race- and class-based marginalization on this predominantly White campus—and shape students' experiences by helping or hindering them academically

and socially.

I used social network techniques to analyze the friendship networks of 67 MU students and found they clumped into three distinctive types—tight-knitters, compartmentalizers, and samplers. *Tight-knitters* have one densely woven friendship group in which nearly all their friends are friends with one another. *Compartmentalizers*' friends form two to four clusters, where friends know each other within clusters but rarely across them. And *samplers* make a friend or two from a variety of places, but the friends remain unconnected to each other. As shown in the figures, tight-knitters' networks resemble a ball of yarn, compartmentalizers' a bow-tie, and samplers' a daisy. In these network maps, the person I interviewed is at the center and every other dot represents a friend, with lines representing connections among friends (that is, whether the person I interviewed believed that the two people knew each other)… .

The students' friendship network types influenced how friends matter for their academic and social successes and failures. Like Valerie, most Black and Latina/o students were tight-knitters. Their dense friendship networks provided a sense of home as a minority on a predominantly White campus. Tight-knit networks could provide academic support and motivation (as they did for Valerie) or pull students down academically if their friends lacked academic skills and motivation. Most White students were compartmentalizers like Betsy, and they succeeded with moderate levels of social support from friends and with social support and academic support from different clusters. Samplers came from a range of class and race backgrounds. Like Steve, samplers typically succeeded academically without relying on their friends. Friends were fun people who neither help nor hurt them academically. Socially, however, samplers reported feeling lonely and lacking social support.

I followed the experiences of Valerie, Betsy, and Steve during and after college to examine how friendship networks matter. These students are typical of those in my broader sample. Their experiences show how students' race and class, more than other individual characteristics, shaped the networks they formed and the benefits they gained through these networks. The students I interviewed were racially (half were Black or Latina/o, the other half were White) and class diverse (half were the first in their family to attend college)… . Certainly, I could not capture all views or generalize my findings across all U.S. college students, but I am able to provide important insights into the processes through which friends provide social and academic benefits in the critical college years.

The Power of Peers

Scholars who study education have long acknowledged the importance of peers for students' well-being and academic achievement. For example, in 1961, James Coleman argued that peer culture within high schools shapes students' social and academic aspirations and successes. More recently, Judith Rich Harris has drawn on research in a range of areas—from sociological studies of preschool children to primatologists' studies of chimpanzees and criminologists' studies of neighborhoods—to argue that peers matter much more than parents in how children "turn out." …

Social scientists have also studied the power of peers through network analysis, which is based on uncovering the web of connections between people. Network analysis involves visually mapping networks and mathematically comparing their structures (such as the density of ties) and the positions of individuals within them (such as how central a given person is within the network). As Nicholas Christakis and James Fowler point out in their book *Connected*, network structure influences a range of outcomes, including health, happiness, wealth, weight, and emotions… .

In line with this network tradition, I focus on the structure of friendship networks, constructing network maps so that the differences we see across participants are due to the underlying structure, including each participant's centrality in their friendship group and the density of ties among their friends.

Tight-Knitters

I first spoke with Valerie at the end of her first year at MU. She is a Black student whose parents both had college degrees and professional jobs. During her first year, Valerie made friends in campus clubs and maintained ties to many friends from home who attended other colleges or joined the army. She described having a tight-knit network of 20 friends.

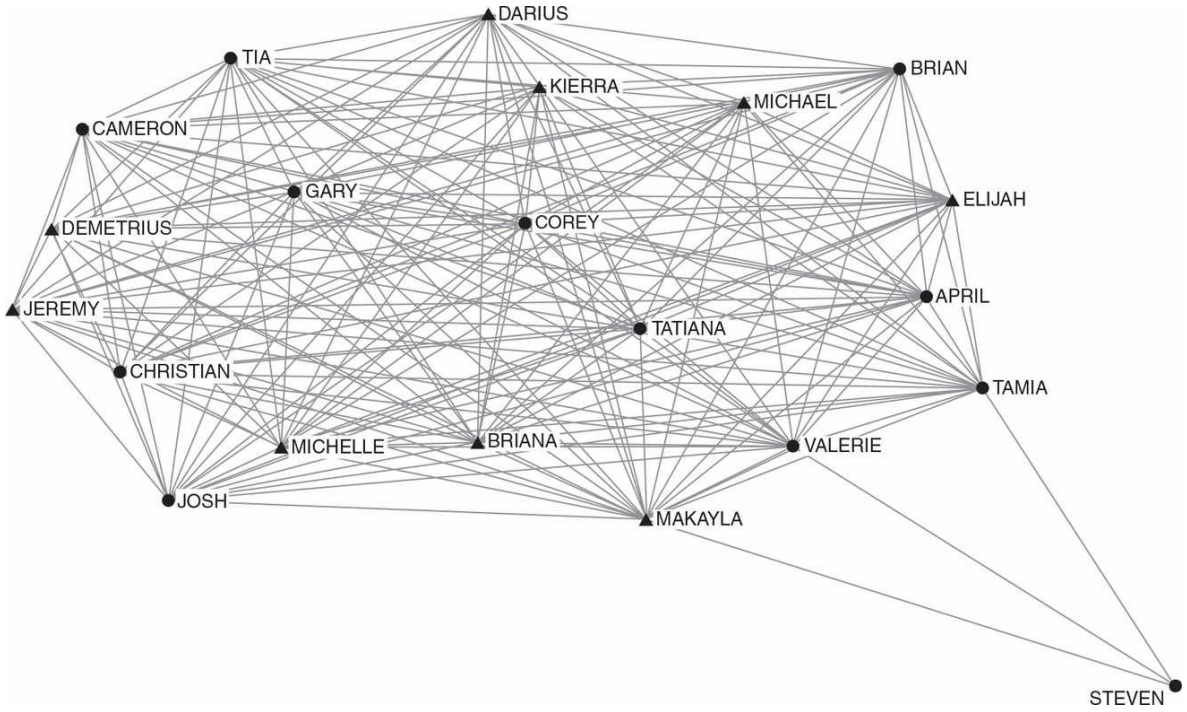
When you map her tight-knit network, it looks like a ball of yarn (Figure 43.1). Being surrounded by a group where friends all know each other provided tight-knitters with multiple friends to whom they could turn. This cultivated a sense of belonging. Tight-knit networks typically provide tremendous social support, and I found students who experienced these tight-knit friendship networks often referred to them as a "family" or their "home."

Most tight-knitters were students of color who found the social support of their network helpful in navigating a predominantly White campus. Valerie put it this way: "Being a minority, it's kind of hard coming here and finding people who [have] the same interests as you… . This [friendship group] is like being at home again. It's like when you come to college, you don't need the whole home but you want to feel somewhat of being at home." …

Tight-knit networks varied considerably in terms of friends' level and types of academic involvement. Some tight-knitters had friendship networks that helped them academically in multiple ways. Valerie said her friends' emotional support and successes motivated her to "want to succeed." Her friends studied together, quizzed each other before exams, proofread each other's papers, and occasionally engaged in intellectual discussions. For Valerie, friendship was an academic boon.

Tight-knit networks, however, did not always pull students up academically. They pulled some tight-knitters down, helping to reproduce race- and class-based inequalities. Valerie contrasts the positive peer effects she experiences with what she sees among some other students: "If you're around your friends a lot and they didn't care about books and stuff like that, I have potential to not care about books and stuff like that." … When asked about her biggest academic obstacle, Madison admitted, "I hate to say [it, but] I can't help but think about my friends." She went on to describe how her friends distracted her from attending class, studying by herself, and even while studying together. This distraction was not counterbalanced by other academic involvement, as lower-achieving tight-knitters' friends often lacked academic skills and provided, at most, limited emotional support and intellectual engagement for each other. All behaviors—negative and positive—were quite contagious within tight-knit networks. Consequently, all tight-knitters who described their friends as providing academic support and motivation graduated; only half of the tight-knitters who felt they lacked this support graduated.

Figure 43.1 Valerie's Friendship Network: A Tight–Knitter

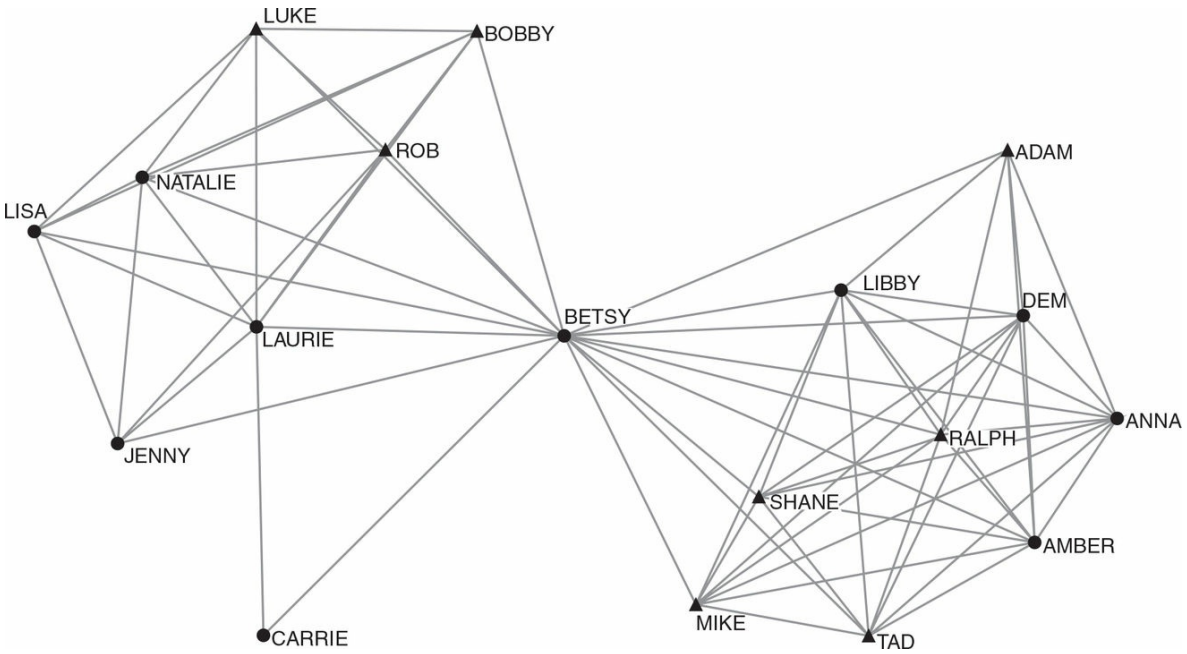


Tight-knit networks provided tremendous social support, while also posing social challenges for some students. Tight-knitters were more likely than others to tell me that they both felt different from their friends and that they kept these feelings from their friends. When uniformity was valued, it seemed harder to deviate in these dense networks. Still, while tight-knit networks are not always positive for students' social lives, they generally provide important social support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds dealing with race- and class-based isolation on campus. In this way, friendships among students from disadvantaged backgrounds can help reduce racial and socioeconomic class gaps in grades and graduation rates.

Compartmentalizers

Betsy named a similar number of friends as Valerie, but described different relationships among those friends as well as different benefits accrued from these relationships. Betsy's 17 friends were divided into two clusters: those she met at MU, mostly on her dorm floor, and those from home, most of whom are students at other colleges.

Figure 43.2 Betsy's Friendship Network: A Compartmentalizer



Compartmentalized networks look like a bow-tie, with distinct clusters of friends (Figure 43.2)… . Like Betsy, most compartmentalizers were White and middle-class. They typically had one socially oriented cluster and one academically oriented cluster. Betsy explained her friends' closeness primarily as a result of their shared interests—"having fun," going to parties, and watching movies. When I asked about her friends from home, she sheepishly explained that those friends did not discuss schoolwork or intellectual ideas. Her MU friends, however, were involved academically in several ways. They bounced ideas for papers off of one another, quizzed each other before exams, and watched TV together while they studied. Although her friends' academic involvement was more modest than Valerie's, it was adequate to support Betsy, who felt she could "easily" navigate academic and social life. Betsy explained, "I will study and I will get good grades, but I will also go out almost every night. It's funny because my friends … they're like, 'Blah blah blah. Are you going out tonight? Of course you are! I don't know how you do it.' But I think some people can be both [academic and social]. Easily." Betsy also noted that her friends could be an academic distraction, "but sometimes you can afford to get distracted." She felt her two clusters of friends enabled her to balance schoolwork and friendly fun… . Students with more than two clusters of friends felt pressure—on their time and identity—in keeping up with multiple friendship groups. The clusters provided a sense of belonging, but maintaining ties can be demanding, and these demands escalated with each additional cluster.

… To be academically and socially successful, Black and Latino compartmentalizers and those from lower-

class backgrounds had two other features in their networks: they found multiple types of academic involvement within one cluster of friends (similar to the tight-knitters, such as Valerie) and they had a cluster of friends who helped them deal with race- or class-based marginality. Regarding the latter, Wendy, a Black compartmentalizer, pointed to the "support systems" within a cluster of Black friends in her major as most helpful for her social success at MU. These additional network features helped compartmentalizers from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve social and academic success; those compartmentalizers whose networks lacked such social and academic support clusters typically had low GPAs. In general, compartmentalizers came from more advantaged backgrounds (like Betsy), experienced greater ease on campus, and succeeded in college with less support from friends as compared to those with other network types. Friendships among students from more advantaged backgrounds helped to reproduce their advantages.

Samplers

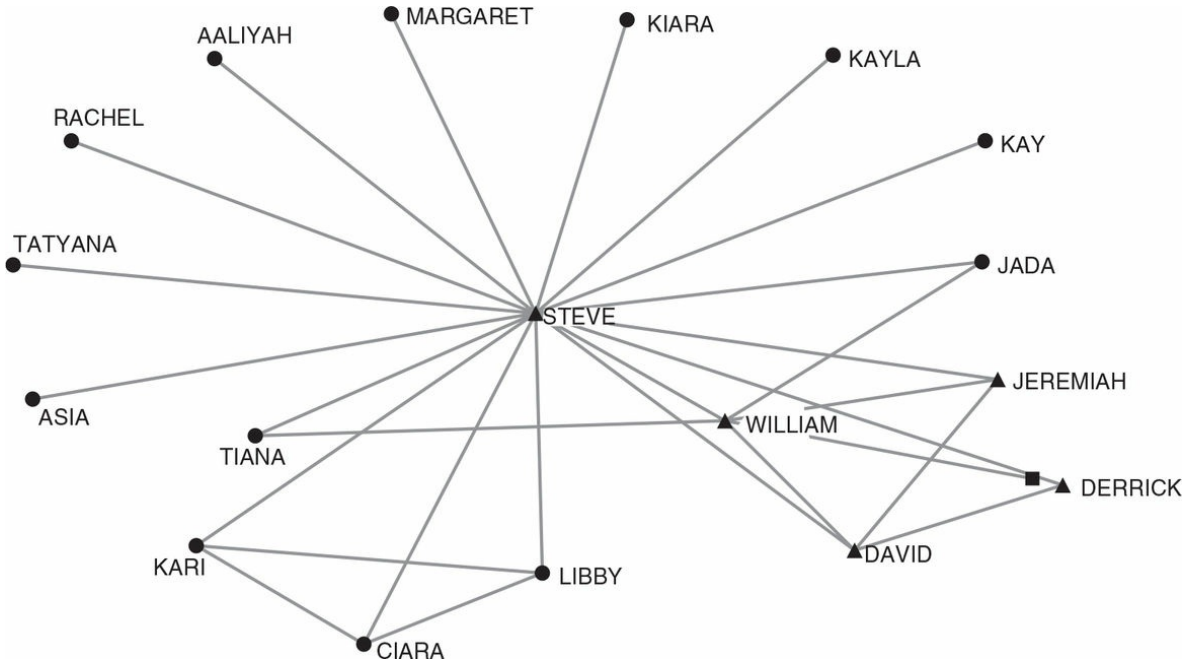
When I interviewed Steve, he was in his third year at MU. As we talked about his friends, it quickly became clear that his friendship choices were not what he had hoped for. He had not made the intense friendships he expected among other Black males at MU, and he found it challenging to maintain close friendships with his hometown friends a four-hour drive away. Steve had four Black male friends from home, one Black female friend from home, and twelve Black female friends from MU. His MU friendships were not clustered, but separated, since Steve would meet one person at a specific place, club, or event. His strategy was to constantly search for new opportunities, describing how he "came [to college] to meet new people." This strategy resulted in a friendship network that resembled a daisy (Figure 43.3). Steve's total number of friends was similar to Valerie and Betsy's, but fewer of his friends knew each other—thus the shape and support of his network were quite different.

… Students of color frequently described experiencing race-based isolation on campus regardless of their network type; samplers, however, *remained* isolated. They rarely discussed isolating experiences with friends, and samplers were ambivalent at best about whether their friends provided social support or whether they needed social support. For example, Matthew's eyes became gloomy when he described feeling "slightly distant" from his friends, whereas Jocelyn firmly characterized her friendships as "disappointing." Compartmentalized and tight-knit networks, in contrast, facilitated a sense of support and belonging on campus.

Samplers are academically successful in spite of their friends. Their friends provide little academic help or engagement, but they don't pull the samplers down academically either. Negative behaviors that were contagious within tight-knitters' networks did not spread within samplers' networks due to lack of ties among friends. In other words, their network structure shielded samplers from friends' negative influences.

Many samplers, such as Steve, described their main source of academic support as their family, but often desired more intellectual conversations with friends. Similar to how he gave up on the possibility of finding a best male friend at MU, Steve seemed to give up on the possibility of finding academically engaged friends, groaning that, "some people don't think that deep." Many samplers described one friend with whom they could discuss intellectual ideas, but they wanted more of these relationships and more of these discussions. With only one friend involved academically in a limited way, samplers lacked the tremendous breadth and depth provided by tight-knitters' full network and the adequate support provided by compartmentalizers' clusters. Samplers frequently described themselves as "academically self-sufficient" or independent. Amanda said outright that academics, for her, were "more of a personal journey. I've never really learned anything with somebody." While samplers demonstrate that friends are not necessary for academic success, one can't help but wonder if they might be even more successful if they allowed or encouraged their friends to become friends with academic benefits.

Figure 43.3 Steve's Friendship Network: A Sampler


MARGARET
KIARA
AALIYAH
KAYLA
RACHEL
KAY
TATYANA
JADA
STEVE
JEREMIAH
ASIA
WILLIAM
TIANA
DERRICK
KARI
DAVID
LIBBY
CIARA

The Lasting Effects of College Friendship Network Types

The networks students build during college are part of a pathway of friendships that informs their social and work lives after college. When I interviewed these youth five years later when many but not all of them had graduated, I found less variation in young adults' post-college networks than during college. Yet there remained differences across network types.

Compartmentalizers remained compartmentalizers, and tight-knitters generally stayed tight-knitters, but the samplers mostly became tight-knitters too. After college, Betsy still had two groups of friends while Valerie and Steve both had one large, tight-knit group with a few pairs of friends and disconnected friends. Further, the network types appear more durable than the specific friends within them: there was much turnover in networks, with only about 25% of friends remaining over this five-year period.

Young adults were more likely to maintain friendships with socially and academically supportive friends than other types of college friends. This was true for young adults from each of the network types, and it helps explain why tight-knitters maintained more of their prior friendships (almost one-third) over time than did the samplers and compartmentalizers (with about a quarter retention among their college friends five years later)… .

Samplers experienced the largest change, not only in terms of network structure but also in terms of social support. While samplers' college networks left them feeling isolated, after college, most samplers had networks that provided meaningful social support. For example, Steve did not maintain contact with his MU friends after college, though he kept some ties to childhood friends from home and formed new friendships after college. Steve described these post-college friends as "like family" and noted how they are "learning more about each other in a deeper way instead of just surface, like what you like to do for fun." … Sampler networks facilitate self-sufficiency, rather than a sense of belonging. Only one of the samplers (Jocelyn) remained isolated after college, which suggests that a mismatch with MU rather than some constant personality trait or friendship preference distinguishes samplers from the other network types.

… As the examples of Valerie, Betsy, and Steve show, each network type comes with particular academic and social benefits as well as drawbacks. Tight-knitters benefit from social support, but need to watch out for friends who can distract them or drag them down academically. Compartmentalizers find balance in social and academic involvement from different clusters, and samplers appear academically successful, but often feel socially isolated.

Individual characteristics certainly shape the friendships people form, though my findings show that friendships are also shaped by one's experiences within specific contexts, such as race- and class-based isolation on a predominantly White campus… . Friendships thus have the potential to ameliorate or reproduce inequalities. It is important, therefore, that students, their parents, professors, and college administrators recognize that students' friends can be incredible resources as well as liabilities. At a time when only 40% of students graduate from 4-year colleges within 4 years, we need to better understand how friends

can either pull students up academically or bring them down.

Recommended Resources

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Laura T. Hamilton. 2013. Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. An examination of how a large public university aligns with the expectations and backgrounds of some students but not others.

Chambliss, Daniel F. and Christopher G. Takacs. 2014. How College Works. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Based on research at a liberal arts college, this book offers suggestions to colleges and students for improving higher education through personal relationships.

Christakis, Nicholas A. and James H. Fowler. 2009. Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives. New York: Little, Brown. A comprehensive look at how social networks, including those to which we are only distantly connected, impact many aspects of people's behavior and attitudes.

Lee, Elizabeth M. and Chaise LaDousa, editors. 2015. College Students' Experiences of Power and Marginality: Sharing Spaces and Negotiating Differences. New York: Routledge. A collection of research studies investigating how students navigate differences on campus.

Milner, Murray, Jr. 2016 (second edition). Freaks, Geeks, and Cool Kids: American Teenagers, Schools, and the Culture of Consumption. New York: Routledge. An examination of status hierarchies in high schools that identifies factors that separate or bring teens together.

Small, Mario Luis. 2009. Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life. New York: Oxford University Press. An impressive mixed-methods study of childcare centers and mothers' social networks in these centers.

Projects for Further Exploration

1. Go online to get national data to compare the percentage of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American, and White student, as well as men and women, graduates (BA/BS, MA/MS, and PhD). How do these disparities compare with the arguments presented in the readings in this chapter?
2. Looking at your college's website, what opportunities do students have to participate in their institution's extracurricular domains (Greek life, clubs and organizations, study abroad, and internships)? To what extent are these opportunities accessible to all students (whether in terms of cost or knowledge about them)?
3. Many colleges and universities are locked in a ratings race. Using the Internet, what factors are used to rank colleges and universities? To what extent do these factors make sense as metrics for evaluating college quality?

Chapter 10 Globalization and Education: Comparing Global Systems

From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, children around the world attend schools, but their access, goals, and experiences vary greatly. For some, the goal is a university education and professional degrees. For others, basic literacy is all children can hope to achieve, regardless of their ability. Not long ago in human history, education of children was carried out informally; during the socialization process, parents, relatives, and elders taught children the skills they would need to survive. Early scholars were primarily religious figures who studied to read and interpret religious texts. However, with industrialization, globalization, and advances in technology, new forces are driving education and educational reform. The growth of industry, trade, business, and demand for an educated workforce is now heard around the world (Ballantine, Hammack, & Stuber, 2017).

The term *globalization* means many things to many people. Attempts at a concise definition are difficult because some scholars define its historical beginnings; others look at the political, economic, or sociocultural aspects of the process; and still others use interdisciplinary analysis, including business and economics. Some studying globalization focus on "globalization from above" and "globalization from below." Globalization from above looks at the big picture—major world patterns and trends related to globalization, such as Westernization, internationalization, marketization, and educational needs (Ritzer & Dean, 2015). This top-down globalization generally starts from two points. The first is scholars who consider historical shifts and cultural patterns resulting in globalization. The second considers the role of multinational corporations and global political and economic organizations in globalization. Globalization from below, on the other hand, focuses on fragmentation and inequalities caused by globalization, and what is happening in traditional and local communities, some of which are being hard hit by effects of globalization and the rich–poor divide. This is where the educational divide is very apparent.

Theories of educational change today assume that global political, economic, and social change affects educational systems around the world in numerous ways. New theories are emerging to view this ongoing process of change (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). *Institutional theory*, for example, is concerned with influence from the global social environment and broader cultural norms on educational systems. Several questions guide the studies of researchers who take this approach: Why do educational organizations located in different communities and even countries have similar practices and structures? How do these organizations adapt to changing conditions in their environments? How do broader forces in individual countries and internationally result in change across organizations? (Ballantine et al., 2017; Meyer, 2009).

Understanding the impact of globalization on educational systems is critical to understanding education in today's world. Major theoretical perspectives proposed to help us understand globalization and education include world systems theory and postcolonialism, among others (Spring, 2008). For example, just as countries are divided by economic systems and wealth into center core areas and poorer peripheral areas (world systems theory), so too do educational systems reflect the economic and political institutions of a given

society and its place in the world system. Within and between countries, educational levels reflect the economic status of families, communities, and societies. Distinctions between countries lie at the base of many comparative studies and sometimes reflect the former colonial status of countries (postcolonial theory).

The United Nations conducts the *Global Monitoring Report* (GMR) every 15 years to determine what progress has been made on educational goals at the global level. These goals, *Education for All 2000–2015: Achievements and Challenges*, are developed every 15 years under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The following summarize six main goals and the overall findings. These are referred to in Reading 47 and have influenced findings in many other reports.

Goal 1. Expand early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable children. Forty-seven percent of countries reached the goal and another eight percent were close. Twenty percent were very far from the goal. Yet, in 2012, nearly two-thirds more children were enrolled in early childhood education than in 1999.

Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education, particularly for girls, ethnic minorities, and marginalized children. Fifty-two percent of countries achieved this goal; ten percent are close, and the remaining thirty-eight percent are far or very far from achieving it. This leaves almost 100 million children not completing primary education in 2015. A lack of focus on the marginalized has left the poorest five times less likely to complete a full cycle of primary education than the richest and over a third of out-of-school children living in conflict affected zones. There have been important successes: Around 50 million more children are enrolled in school now than were in 1999. Education is still not free in many places, but cash transfer and school feeding programs have had a positive impact on school enrolment for the poor.

Goal 3. Ensure access to learning and life skills for youth and adults. Forty-six percent of countries reached universal lower secondary enrolment. Globally, numbers in lower secondary education increased by 27% and more than doubled in sub-Saharan Africa. Nonetheless, one-third of adolescents in low-income countries will not complete lower secondary school in 2015.

Goal 4. Achieving a 50% reduction in levels of adult illiteracy by 2015. Only 25% of countries reached this goal; 32% remain very far from it. While globally the percentage of illiterate adults fell from 18% in 2000 to 14% in 2015, this progress is almost entirely attributed to more educated young people reaching adulthood. Women continue to make up almost two-thirds of the illiterate adult population. Half of sub-Saharan African women do not have basic literacy skills.

Goal 5. Achieve gender parity and equality. Gender parity will be achieved at the primary level in 69% of countries by 2015. At secondary level, only 48% of countries will reach the goal. Child marriage and early pregnancy continue to hinder girls' progress in education as does the need for teacher training in gender sensitive approaches and curriculum reform.

Goal 6. Improve the quality of education and ensure measurable learning outcomes for all. The numbers of pupils per teacher decreased in 121 of 146 countries between 1990 and 2012 at the primary level, but 4 million more teachers are still needed to get all children into school. Trained teachers remain in short supply in one-third of countries; in sub-Saharan African countries, less than 50% are trained. However, education quality has received increased attention since 2000; the number of countries carrying out national learning assessments has doubled.

Source: United Nations, 2015. *Education for All 2000–2015: Achievements and Challenges*. "Only a third of countries reached global education goals." New York: Office of Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Sociologists of education are particularly interested in the differences in world educational systems because those differences help to put their own national systems into perspective. The following paragraphs summarize several areas of study in comparative education that influence education today and are discussed in the readings in Chapter 10.

Goals for global education

Sociologists of education have traced the origins of modern educational systems and curricula to former colonial systems. For instance, former British colonies often include classical British literature in their curriculum and require the British O-level and A-level (vocational and university entrance) examinations at the completion of high school and for entrance to university. However, critics argue that this type of system is not preparing all citizens for the realities of their world because O-level students do not always receive the same amount or quality of education (Dupraz, 2015; Ramirez & Boli-Bennett, 1987). Some former colonized countries have developed educational systems that meet the needs of the majority of their populations, often including information on agricultural practices, health care, and other essential subjects for their societies.

Although there are commonalities in educational systems around the world, many researchers question whether that convergence is good for all members of all societies, especially students from peripheral third world countries. These scholars suggest that learning to read materials relevant to the needs of rural farmers, for example, would be more appropriate for some members of society than learning Latin. This is a key point made by educational reformers Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire (1973; also Freire & Macedo, 1995) with regard to Latin America and other developing regions.

Comparison of educational systems

Most countries provide free education for basic literacy skills, and many require schooling to the age of 16. Some countries even provide free education through the university level for those who qualify. However, the world's children do not have equal opportunity to attend schools, as discussed in the second and fourth readings in this chapter. Although variations in educational systems around the world are great, there are also areas of similarity (Attewell & Newman, 2010). Comparisons of systems take many approaches, including reviewing curricula, test results, structures of educational systems, access to education, and other variables. There are attempts to copy strategies of successful countries or sometimes to impose educational systems on others. However, cultures—and therefore, educational systems—cannot be transported easily from one nation to another. Each country must meet its own needs based in its unique situation. Still, similarities in curricular content around the world have evolved because of global educational demands, even as these systems provide education to meet their national needs.

Educating all children

In the first reading in this chapter, researchers at the Brookings Institution discuss the necessity of educating all children for today's world. They point out the status of educational systems today, what changes need to take place, and the challenges that lie ahead. These researchers provide broad recommendations about improving access to education and quality of education to help meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Countries of the world are becoming more interdependent and sharing ideas about effective curricula and structures of educational systems in today's interdependent world. This means that there will be a need for continued study of the processes of globalization, urbanization, development, and change around the world as they impact educational systems.

Race, class, gender, and different school experiences

Continuing the discussion of educating all, children have very different experiences in schools. Race, class, and gender all affect what chances a child has to achieve in school. Most poignant are the cases of girls in some Middle Eastern, Asian, and African countries who have limited opportunities in life, face early marriages and female genital mutilation, and receive much less education than their brothers (Lewis & Lockheed, 2006). Although many children from poor families in poor villages are at an educational disadvantage, girls are most severely affected (Sperling, 2005)—yet girls are the ones who raise and feed the children and often need to support the family. A measure of the development of a country can be seen in the statistics on education of girls.

The reading by Maureen A. Lewis and Marlaine E. Lockheed provides a picture of the situation for girls in many poorer countries, especially in rural areas. Due to poverty, political or religious beliefs, lack of infrastructure to accommodate all children, and a host of other problems, girls and some minority children may not have the opportunity to attend school, even primary school, to reach basic literacy. Lewis and Lockheed lament the status of girls in some countries and regions. They point out the benefits of educating girls and the costs to society and girls when there is a lack of educational opportunity.

International comparative testing

In the third reading, David H. Kamens and Connie L. McNeely review national assessments of educational systems and comparative educational testing. They also discuss the global trends in curriculum and testing that have brought similarities in educational expectations across the globe. Findings generally support a convergence of curricular themes across nations, reflecting the social, political, economic, and educational interdependence of nations (Chabbott & Ramirez, 2000; McEneaney & Meyer, 2000). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) are two international tests that compare scores of children around the world in literacy, mathematics, science, civic education, and foreign language. These rankings provide information on the similarities, differences, and effects of development on educational systems. The comparatively low scores of U.S. students are of concern to U.S. educators and government officials. However, it is necessary to exercise caution when interpreting international data because, despite United Nations guidelines, data gathered in countries are not always standardized. Therefore, when reporting results, comparative studies must take this into account (Baker & LeTendre, 2005).

With the ubiquity of globalization and the impact on educational needs and patterns around the globe, no nation seems able to ignore education for the contemporary needs of society. This chapter addresses some of the issues in this growing field of international education.

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READING 44

A Global Compact on Learning

Taking Action on Education in Developing Countries

Brookings Institution

In our globalizing world, education is the key to countries' participation in the global economy and in opportunities for future generations. Governments, international organizations (United Nations and World Bank), foundations (Brookings and Russell Sage), and academic organizations representing different disciplines collect data and provide recommendations on a plethora of educational issues. Included here is the summary of a report from the Brookings Institution with broad recommendations on how countries around the world can improve access to education and quality of education to meet goals that parallel the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG). They include early childhood development; basic literacy and numeracy skills; and transitioning and completing postprimary (and in some cases secondary) education. The report outlines strategies to meet the recommendations (see Figure 44.1). The introduction to this chapter presented selected data on the state of education in the world. Ideas for improving school opportunity and attendance are discussed here and elsewhere in this book. This article suggests areas that need attention to meet country and world goals.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Considering what the Brookings Institution recommends to strengthen global education, what do you see as strengths and weaknesses in these ideas?
2. If you were the leader of a country with limited resources, which of the priorities and strategies listed in Figure 44.1 would you prioritize, and why?
3. How might a country's "context" (i.e., factors affecting children's educational opportunities) affect educational opportunities? Give an example and what factors you would take into consideration.

From "A Global Compact on Learning: Taking Action on Education in Developing Countries" (pp. 12–16), by the Brookings Institution, June 8, 2011. Reprinted with permission from Brookings Institution Press.

What Is Needed to Ensure Learning for All?

Given that there is a learning crisis for those currently both in and out of school, the question is how to ensure that all children and youth have access to high-quality learning opportunities that build relevant skills and knowledge to enable them to live healthy, productive lives and adapt to a rapidly changing world. Although there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and education reforms are most successful when embedded within system-wide efforts, this report identifies three main priorities and accompanying strategies that the latest evidence indicates are needed to best address the three dimensions of the learning crisis:

1. *Support quality early childhood development and learning opportunities for girls and boys*. High-quality early childhood development activities have long been shown to have a lasting impact on learning. These activities—which include health, nutrition, and stimulation—can also lead to cost-saving efficiencies in primary school by increasing overall retention, reducing attrition, and raising primary school completion rates. These returns are often greatest for children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. Despite a 30 percent increase in participation in preprimary education programs between 1998 and 2008, a global enrollment rate of just 44 percent shows that many children are excluded from these critical early learning opportunities. Across countries, access to preprimary programs is highly uneven; within countries, attendance patterns typically show that children from the poorest and most marginalized households are least likely to attend preprimary school.[1]
2. *Ensure that children acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills in lower primary grades*. The ability to read, write, and do mathematics are foundational skills for all future learning. It is also the minimum that families expect when they send their children to school. It is crucial to start early as there is a relationship between failure to learn to read and falling further behind each year or dropping out altogether. This link is particularly important for low-income girls and conflict-affected young people who remain the most educationally marginalized. Prioritizing literacy and numeracy in the lower primary grades maximizes investments by ensuring children move from learning to read to reading to learn. Recent evidence identifies actions that can improve literacy and numeracy in the lower primary grades, however more work is needed to understand how essential critical thinking skills can be developed in the process.
3. *Enable young people to make the transition to and complete relevant post-primary education*. Despite considerable evidence of the many social and economic returns from secondary school, too few girls and boys continue beyond primary school; for those who do, many are not learning the skills they need for their future lives and livelihoods. More young people must be supported to transition to post-primary education while simultaneously addressing serious concerns about the applicability, or relevance, of what they learn to their current and future lives. We already know some aspects of how to do this, but this effort will require taking successful interventions to scale, for instance by addressing financial barriers through well-targeted subsidies and training more female teachers. We also know, however, that business as usual will not suffice. Alternative, flexible models that utilize innovative modes of delivery must be tested and more rigorous evaluations are required, particularly of non-format programs. Any reform must not only focus on academic skills but also ensure that children are learning the context-

specific and health-related skills needed to thrive in the 21st century. All this is particularly crucial for poor girls given the high social and economic benefits of secondary school for these girls and their families and communities—and given the extremely low number of girls transitioning to post-primary school in many countries.

As important as these three priorities are, none of this will happen without an enabling environment that focuses attention on teachers and students. It is important to move beyond a sole focus on inputs and to also focus on teaching and learning processes and outcomes; on equity-based strategies for reaching those left furthest behind, such as poor girls; on accountability and the participation of local communities; and on the safety and security of children. Figure 44.1 portrays this enabling environment and these strategies in the context of the three priorities, as well as strategies that they all have in common… .

Figure 44.1 Elements of the Global Compact on Learning

PRIORITIES	**PRIORITY 1** Support quality early childhood development and learning opportunities for girls and boys		**PRIORITY 2** Build foundational skills in literacy and numeracy in the lower primary grades		**PRIORITY 3** Support transitioning to and completing secondary school and post-primary opportunities that build relevant life and labor skills	
STRATEGIES	Extend quality early childhood development opportunities, particularly to poor and marginalized communities	Ensure girls and boys start school at an appropriate age	Prioritize literacy and numeracy in the lower primary grades	Provide mother-tongue-based multilingual education in the lower primary grades	Reduce barriers preventing girls and boys from transitioning to secondary school and other post-primary educational opportunities	Ensure that post-primary education prepares young people for healthy lives, productive work, and civic participation
STRATEGIES COMMON TO ALL PRIORITIES	• Improve the quality of teaching • Build effective assessment systems linked to teaching and learning					

Overall system improvement requires targeted approaches to leveling the playing field for least advantaged areas, schools, and children

While overcoming marginalization in education is different in every country and the optimal approach will depend on local conditions, progress is possible with sustained political commitment to address the underlying causes of that exclusion, such as gender discrimination, ethnic and linguistic disadvantages, and gaps between urban and rural areas.[2] This requires targeting financial and learning support to the most disadvantaged schools.[3] Almost all countries with high-performing education systems devote equal, if not more, resources to schools facing the greatest challenges.[4] Strong performing post-conflict countries have focused on developing education systems that are more inclusive of girls and other marginalized groups.[5] Western Cape Province in South Africa, for example, has improved grade three and six literacy levels since 2002 while simultaneously narrowing the achievement gap of the poorest and lowest-performing quintiles of students. It achieved this by identifying communities with the greatest learning challenges, understanding the specific needs of these communities, and tailoring its support accordingly.[6]

Advancing learning for all requires involving students, parents, and communities in the teaching

and learning process

Research has consistently identified parental involvement as a strong predictor of student achievement. It is particularly important in efforts to reach excluded children, and specifically girls. This means involving parents, caregivers, and communities in the governance of early childhood development services and in schools, as well as encouraging parents to provide a supportive home environment in which children can learn.[7] Social accountability initiatives, such as community scorecards and social audits, can provide young people with avenues to hold governments and service providers to account for quality educational programs. In Uganda, Cambodia, and Senegal, student involvement in school management and oversight has led to significant improvements in the school environment, and there is emerging evidence that it is contributing to decreased levels of student and teacher absenteeism and improved student performance.[8] When students and parents have reliable information about the quality of education services, they are better able to advocate for and extract better services and/or choose among providers.[9] A program in Madagascar that told parents about average income gains from spending an additional year in school for children with backgrounds similar to theirs had a significant effect on increasing test scores.[10] In Colombia, Iran, and Thailand, local decisionmaking about supplies and the hiring of teachers led to higher test results in math and science.[11] A large civil society initiative in India, the Annual Status of Education Report, uses simple tools to collect data in every rural district in India on children's ability to read and do basic mathematics. The program also has a strategy for dissemination and community mobilization. The annual survey and related advocacy has strengthened accountability in India by involving ordinary citizens in understanding the current situation in primary school and holding education providers and policymakers accountable.[12]

Advancing learning for all requires ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for girls and boys

Corporal punishment, gender-based violence, armed conflict, and natural disasters remain a daily reality for millions of girls and boys. Ninety countries out of 197 monitored by the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children permit teachers to legally beat students.[13] In far too many countries, gender-based violence—which can include rape, sexual harassment, and pressure to trade sexual favors for grades, school supplies, or academic support, among other violations—is inextricably linked to education. According to one global study, an estimated 60 million girls are sexually assaulted at or on their way to school every year.[14] In times of crisis, violence against girls and boys often escalates due to a breakdown in law and order, along with an increased presence of armed groups. Safe, high-quality education in the midst of crisis is a crucial life-saving and life-sustaining intervention that has implications for the peace and prosperity of societies. Yet too often, natural disasters—such as earthquakes, floods, and tsunamis—inflict harm on both students and education personnel through the destruction of educational systems, threatening the physical safety and psychological well-being of learners and interrupting educational continuity. With the number and intensity of natural disasters increasing in many countries, schools and communities must prepare to mitigate their impact.

Specific actions to advance learning for all is dependent on the local context

… What is to be done is often universal, how it is done is highly context specific, … [with] widely varying concerns encountered in different countries and regions. Governments are addressing learning needs from different perspectives, and their capacities to fulfill their obligations vary enormously. So each strategy needs to be tailored to the institutional cultures, human resources, and other capacities of nations and to particular locations based on the involvement of local communities. Yet each of these three policy priorities and its accompanying key actions are nonetheless relevant in various contexts and can be used by stakeholders to develop appropriate education policies for specific communities.

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READING 45

Inexcusable Absence

Who Are the Out-of-School Girls—and What Can Be Done to Get Them in School?

Maureen A. Lewis and Marlaine E. Lockheed

In rich global north (developed) countries, girls generally have the same chance to obtain an education as boys. In fact, they attend university at higher rates than males, although the typical fields women pursue may not pay as well as fields males pursue. The picture is different in poor global south countries. Many girls, especially those from rural areas and minority groups, have no opportunities to pursue even primary-level education, leaving them illiterate. Maureen A. Lewis and Marlaine E. Lockheed discuss some of the reasons for this lack of opportunity for girls and what it means for the girls, their families, their communities, and their countries. Their discussion focuses on the sources of the problem for girls and the types of exclusions they experience. In addition, they look at the number of girls who do not receive education in different parts of the world and the cost to society and girls due to their lack of educational opportunity. Finally, the authors indicate some strategies for advancing educational opportunities for excluded girls.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why are girls in some countries excluded from educational opportunity, what are patterns of girls' exclusion, and how many girls are excluded?
2. What are the consequences of excluding girls from educational opportunity?
3. What can be done to increase the educational opportunities for girls?

Impressive strides have been made in bringing girls into primary school over the past 25 years, with many countries achieving universal primary education and gender parity. But considerable disparity exists within and across countries, with intracountry differences stemming largely from the lagging involvement of excluded groups—rural tribes in Pakistan, lower castes in India, Roma in Europe, indigenous peoples in Latin America. Of the 60 million girls not in primary school, almost 70 percent are from excluded groups. If further progress is to be realized, educating these girls must be a priority.

From *Inexcusable Absence: Why 60 Million Girls Still Aren't in School and What to Do About It* (pp. 1–17), by M. A. Lewis and M. E. Lockheed, Washington, D.C.: Center for Global Development. Copyright 2006 by Center for Global Development. Reprinted with permission.

Who are the 60 million girls who remain out of school nearly two decades after the worldwide declaration on Education for All? These are their faces:

> **Meera, 8,** *lives with her family on a sidewalk in New Delhi, India. During the day she roams major intersections, her infant sister hanging from her hip, begging drivers for coins in the few words of English she*

knows. She does not go to school. In a few years she will be married off to a stranger. She will have six children, one of whom will go to school. Or she will die young, possibly immolated in a kitchen fire for having brought with her an insufficient dowry.

Sonia, 10, *lives on the outskirts of a capital city in Eastern Europe. Like her siblings, all of whom speak only Romani, she does not attend school. Instead, Sonia spends her days committing petty theft to support her family. Adults in the town spit at her and warn visitors to watch their purses when they see her.*

Lia, 12, *went to school for a few years in her remote hill village in Thailand. Then her family sent her to the capital to earn a respectable living in a factory, but she was sold into the sex trade instead. She lives in a brothel and services dozens of clients a day. She will die young, most likely from HIV/AIDS.*

Wambui, 14, *goes to boarding school because no secondary school is available in her Kenyan village. But she will soon be expelled from school because she is pregnant, having been raped at school by boy students from another tribe, who considered it a mere prank.*

Many developing countries have achieved gender equity in education, with near-universal girls' participation converging with that of boys:

Indrani, 10, *is the daughter of illiterate parents living in rural Bangladesh. She goes to school. Her older sister is finishing secondary school and plans to work in the garment factory in the market center. While her mother was betrothed at 12, her parents have decided that their daughters must finish school before marrying.*

Monique, 12, *is excelling in secondary school in Tunisia. She and her siblings have finished primary school with the exception of her eldest sister, whose arranged marriage interrupted her schooling. She expects to work before she marries and plans to have two children.*

Are excluded girls simply the daughters of the poor, or are other, more subtle factors at work? Why do some countries make better progress? School participation figures from six low- and middle-income countries offer some clues:

- In Laos, a low-income country, Lao-Tai girls living in rural communities complete five years of school, whereas hill tribe girls living in comparable communities complete fewer than two years of school.
- In Bangladesh, a low-income country, 86 percent of primary school–age girls attend school and 69 percent complete primary school. There is no significant difference between girls living in urban and rural communities.
- In Guatemala, a lower middle-income country, 62 percent of Spanish-speaking girls but only 26 percent of indigenous, non-Spanish-speaking girls complete primary school.
- In Tunisia, a lower middle-income country, 95 percent of all girls complete primary school and 68 percent are enrolled in secondary school.
- In the Slovak Republic, an upper middle-income country, 54 percent of Slovak girls but only 9 percent of minority girls attend secondary school.
- In Botswana, an upper middle-income country, 95 percent of all girls complete primary school and 57 percent attend secondary school.

Sources, Forms, and Levels of Exclusion

What accounts for these differences? Most obvious is the presence or absence of significant subgroups. Bangladesh, Botswana, and Tunisia are largely homogeneous, while Guatemala, Laos, and the Slovak Republic have excluded subgroups.[1] In homogeneous countries higher shares of girls complete primary school, enroll in secondary school, and see higher achievement than those in heterogeneous countries.

Excluded subgroups are based on tribal, ethnic, linguistic, or traditional occupational classifications, such as the "untouchable" occupations of the lowest caste groups in India. But ethnic or linguistic diversity within a country does not necessarily lead to a failure to educate girls. The Basques in Spain, for example, are linguistically diverse but have high levels of female education. It is diversity accompanied by derogation and discrimination that leads to exclusion. The main driver of the remaining gender inequalities in education is the existence of subgroups within countries, accompanied by social stratification and cultural norms that seclude women. This driver operates both culturally and structurally to exclude girls from school. It is thus a particularly pernicious barrier.

Exclusion can take many forms—the more severe, the greater its effect on school opportunities … At one end are extreme forms of exclusion leading to genocide. Only somewhat less severe is the exclusion associated with ethnically based slavery (not slavery as an outcome of conflict), where education is denied to children of slaves, as was the case for African slaves in the southern United States or Brazil in the 1800s. The shunning of a group, such as the Dalits in India or the Roma in Europe, is less severe. It can result in lack of schools, inaccessible schools, segregated or "special" schools, corporal punishment of students, teacher absenteeism, and generally poor-quality schools. Moderate exclusion can result in schooling that is poorly matched with the needs of students. Consider the conditions faced by Berber children in Morocco before 2005; … teaching and school materials were not in their mother tongue, mild corporal punishment and ability tracking were used, and early qualifying exams excluded poorly performing children from further education.

A mild form of exclusion is that associated with individual social preferences, whereby teachers may overlook students from excluded groups or children from a minority group may not be included in social events. Exclusion can also result in decreased demand for education or for autonomy in the provision of education.

Severe exclusion has structural consequences: schools are not built, curricular materials are not supplied, roads to schools are not paved, and teachers are often absent. Milder exclusion is cultural. It can affect the behavior of teachers and schoolmates, making teachers insensitive to excluded students' needs.

Language and ethnicity are only two of the sources of exclusion. Children living in remote rural communities face structural barriers to education due to distance, and these barriers are most pronounced for girls. Poor children face barriers to education due to the direct and indirect costs of education. Because the poor in developing countries often show a strong preference for sons, education investments are biased toward boys. Residential segregation often results in access to poorer quality schools.

The cultures of subgroups can differ with respect to the status and roles accorded to women. Where women

are secluded, or expected to work long hours performing domestic chores or agricultural labors, cultural beliefs and norms limit girls' educational opportunities. Girls face special cultural barriers associated with their roles in the home and as future wives. As a result, social exclusion from these multiple sources has severe consequences for girls' education and will require different, more tailored policies to remedy them. The degree and nature of exclusion dictates the approach and scope of interventions; often multiple efforts are needed.

How Many Girls Are Excluded?

How many girls are affected by exclusion due to multiple causes? No formal estimates of the numbers of excluded out-of-school girls are available, because most developing countries do not systematically collect or report data on school participation disaggregated by all of the subgroups subject to exclusion. Data from various sources can be used to estimate the figure, however. These data reveal a staggering finding: nearly three-quarters of girls who do not go to school come from excluded groups, while these groups represent only about 20 percent of the developing world's population.

Most out-of-school girls live in Africa and South Asia, which together account for 78 percent of all girls not in school (UIS, 2005). [See Table 45.1.] In some large countries a small share of girls are out of school, but the size of the country means that large numbers of girls are affected. In some small countries the share of out-of-school girls is high, which represents a huge national challenge but adds little quantitatively to the global problem. For example, in Guinea-Bissau 55 percent of school-age girls never attend school, but because the total population of the country is little more than 1.2 million, only about 60,000 school-age girls are not in school. By contrast, in India 20 percent of school-age girls are not in school, but with a national population exceeding 1 billion, 27.7 million girls (ages 7–14) are not in school (Census of India, 2001 [Government of India, 2011]).

Data on excluded girls are limited. But recent Indian census data document how multiple exclusions can deter girls' participation in school. Of the nearly 50 million children 7–14 years old not enrolled in school in India, 55 percent are girls. This figure is disproportionately high, with girls representing just 48 percent of all children 7–14 years old. Of the 27.7 million girls 7–14 years old not enrolled in school, 33 percent come from scheduled castes or scheduled tribes.[2] This figure is also disproportionately high, because only 26 percent of girls this age come from scheduled tribes or scheduled castes.

Table 45.1 Most Primary School-Age Girls Out of Schools Are From Excluded Groups, 2000

Region	*Girls Out of School (thousands)*	*Excluded Girls Out of School[a] (thousands)*	*Excluded Girls as Percent of All Girls Out of School*	*Excluded Subgroups*
Sub-Saharan Africa	23,827	17,870[b]	75	Members of nondominant tribes
South Asia	23,552	15,780[c]	67	Rural people in Afghanistan, scheduled castes and tribes in India, lower castes in Nepal, rural tribes in Pakistan

Middle East and North Africa	5,092	1,680[d]	33	Berbers, rural populations
East Asia and the Pacific	4,870	4,383[e]	90	Hill tribes, Muslim minorities, other ethnic minorities
Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Commonwealth of Independent States	1,583	1,425[f]	90	Roma, rural populations in Turkey
Latin America and the Caribbean	1,497	1,482	99	Indigenous and Afro-Latino populations
Total	60,421	42,620	71	

Source: UIS, 2005; India census, 2001 [Government of India, 2011]; Pakistan household survey, 2001–02 [Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2001–2002]; Vietnam Living Standard Measurement Survey, 1998 [Scott, Steele, & Temesgen, 1998]; Ringold, Orenstein, & Wilkens, 2003; Winkler & Cueto, 2004.

Note: Data are for girls 7–12 years old, unless otherwise noted.

a. Estimated. The percentages in column 3 provide the basis for estimating the total number of out-of-school girls by region reported in column 2.

b. Based on the density of heterogeneity and the assumption that most out-of-school children are from minority groups.

c. Based on 2001 census data from India for the number of girls 7–14 years old from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, on tribal breakdowns in the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey, a household survey of Nepal, and linguistic and ethnic data from non-urban girls in Afghanistan.

d. Percent of Berbers used to determine the number of out-of-school children.

e. Assumes all children out of school come from excluded groups.

f. Includes Roma and Turkish girls out of school.

The cost of excluding girls from school is high, and the benefits of inclusion significant… . The social benefits of educating girls have been widely documented, and studies have also found economic benefits from educating girls.

Mild forms of exclusion often affect girls once they enter school, but the evidence suggests that when girls from excluded groups are given the opportunity to go to school, they tend to go—and to succeed—at least through primary school. Their achievement is often comparable to that of girls from nonexcluded groups and equal to or better than that of excluded boys. Given that the quality of primary schools attended by excluded children is often poor, this is remarkable.

A concatenation of sources of exclusion—gender, ethnicity, area of residence—greatly reduces overall achievement by the time girls reach lower secondary school. Designing interventions and proposing solutions thus require assessing the demand for and supply of education and examining the school practices that affect girls and other excluded subgroups… .

Lessons from developed countries can guide donors and policymakers in developing countries. But even

developed countries grapple with exclusion. In some, failure to establish a level playing field early on has resulted in a backlash that exacerbates rather than mitigates differences. In developing countries, the diversity of subgroups and the specificities of the cultural contexts make building a new body of knowledge essential… .

Ensuring that excluded girls go to school is a major challenge, requiring targeted interventions that address both the structural and cultural dimensions of discrimination in education. The costs of failing are tremendous in terms of lives lost and development opportunities missed.

Advancing Excluded Girls' Education

Strategies for advancing excluded girls' education do not apply in all contexts—what works in one country may prove disastrous in another, and "one size does not fit all." Consider busing. In Bulgaria the largely urban and peri-urban Roma community benefited greatly from being bused to better schools. In rural Turkey, busing led parents to pull their daughters out of school over concern for their safety because the new school was in another village. Context is critical… .

Policies to spark progress with the remaining out-of-school populations will require actions on various fronts:

- Altering education policies and addressing discrimination by changing laws and administrative rules.
- Expanding options for educating out-of-school children, especially girls.
- Improving the quality and relevance of schools and classrooms by ensuring that excluded girls receive basic educational inputs and providing professional development to help teachers become agents of change.
- Supporting compensatory preschool and in-school programs that engage and retain excluded children, particularly girls.
- Providing incentives for households to help overcome both the reluctance to send girls to school and the costs of doing so. Donors could spearhead innovation by:
    - Establishing a trust fund for multilateral programs targeted at excluded girls that supports experimentation, innovative programs, alternative schooling options, and the basic inputs for effective schools.
    - Expanding the knowledge base about what works to improve the school participation and achievement of excluded girls through a girls' education evaluation fund. The fund could finance a range of evaluations to build the knowledge base for policy. It could also assist more heterogeneous countries in participating in international assessments of learning achievement to monitor changes over time.
    - Creating demand by financing the compensatory costs associated with reaching excluded children; promoting outreach programs for parents; building partnerships for conditional, cash transfers; and providing school meals, scholarships for girls, and school stipend programs for books and supplies.

Altering Education Policies and Addressing Discrimination

Changes in policies and rules can help determine the environment in which excluded groups function and increase the credibility of government efforts to reach out-of-school children. Policies alone ensure little, however. Establishing clear mandates against discrimination, a legal system that enforces both entitlements and rights of all citizens, administrative rules that foster the completion of basic education for all children, and an articulated education policy for excluded groups are needed to strengthen the credibility of government, establish a foundation for action, and bring together target populations. These actions also provide a context for engaging donors in advocating for marginalized groups, particularly marginalized girls, and in reaching under-served regions with education programs.

Antidiscrimination laws undergird both legal and policy efforts in fighting exclusion. Clear legal protection offers a beginning in reversing implicit and explicit discrimination against minorities. It has proved critical in Canada, New Zealand, and the United States, where official and public discrimination against minorities was once widespread. South African blacks suffered similarly during apartheid, as did Cuban blacks prior to the revolution of 1958. Unless discrimination is aggressively addressed in the labor market, returns to education will not materialize, reducing the demand for schooling, particularly by girls. Barring trained workers from jobs on the basis of ethnicity, language, or cultural differences has adverse consequences for education because it reduces demand for education by groups that believe the returns will not be positive.

Affirmative action—and the less controversial "preferential" action, which emphasizes bolstering the performance of disadvantaged students while maintaining common standards—has been effective in many countries. Summer math programs and after-school enrichment can strengthen the skills of disadvantaged children. Compensatory programs assume that the minority groups suffer from deficits that can be remedied through tutoring, behavioral guidance, or other compensatory interventions. Brazil, India, Malaysia, South Africa, and Sri Lanka use a combination of affirmative action and compensatory investments to mitigate the effects of discrimination.

Administrative rules often prevent girls from attending schools. In some communities, separate schools for boys and girls are required, which often results in too few schools for girls. Rules preventing children from studying in their mother tongue keep some children who do not speak the language of instruction out of school or make it harder for them to learn. Early ability-based tracking allows schools to provide unequal education programs and produces dropouts. Expulsion of pregnant girls from school and lack of flexibility in school hours for young mothers attempting to continue their schooling after giving birth severely limit their educational opportunities. Changes in all of these rules could increase the number of excluded girls attending school.

Donors could expedite integration by fostering alternative forms of positive discrimination and expanding opportunities for girls who would otherwise have no options. The Open Society Institute assisted local nongovernmental organizations and governments in their efforts to initiate laws and regulations to protect the Roma and make schools safe havens for Roma children. Donor initiatives could also help countries analyze

the educational regulations in place that act as barriers to girls.

Expanding Options for Schooling

One of the lessons from the high-income OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] countries is that targeted, tailored programs are essential to complement overall schooling investments in order to reach excluded populations and keep excluded children in school. A first step in improving access is making schools or school equivalents locally available. Increasing the number of local schools typically results in greater access for children who are historically excluded.

One way of increasing the number of locally available schools is to allow communities to establish their own schools. Community schools are formal schools that provide the basic elements of the school curriculum, adapted to local conditions, including variations in language of instruction and hours of operation. They are designed to shape schooling to meet the needs and ensure the involvement of community members. They are the ultimate means of giving parents voice in the running of schools. South Asia pioneered the approach in 1987 with its *Shiksha Karmi* Project in Rajasthan, India, which uses paraprofessional teachers, allows the community to select and supervise teachers, and hires part-time workers to escort girls to school.

Two alternatives to formal schooling are nonformal schools and distance education. Nonformal schools address gaps or compensate for limitations of existing schools, particularly for children who never started school or who dropped out early and are older than primary school students. In some cases nonformal schools provide basic literacy training. In others they serve as preparation for re-entry into mainstream schools. Nonformal schools can be highly important in preparing disadvantaged children academically and in developing appropriate social skills and self-discipline. Such schools have contributed to progress in primary education in Bangladesh, which has recently achieved gender parity in primary school.

When expansion of schooling requires the use of teachers with less education, radio or television can help provide better quality lessons. Primary education programs that combine radio delivery of a high-quality curriculum with local monitoring of children's progress have been rigorously evaluated and found to boost learning. The most widely used are interactive radio instruction programs, which use professionally developed curricula broadcast to children in remote regions. Thirteen countries have successfully applied such programs.

At the secondary level, distance education programs such as Mexico's *Telesecondaria* offer a full range of courses, which would be difficult to provide in schools serving small communities. For girls with limited access to information or learning outside the immediate community, such programs vastly increase educational opportunities.

What has not succeeded, though, is providing separate schools for children from ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minorities—often tried in earlier periods, as in the United States, Canada, and New Zealand. Separate schools, for example for the Roma throughout Eastern Europe or blacks in the United States pre-1954, are inherently unequal and suffer from poor quality. Similarly, creating separate schools for girls may fail to improve girls' educational outcomes. Separate schools for girls can also limit their access and, because of poor quality, their performance. Indeed, the lagging performance of Pakistan in girls' education can be

attributed in part to the need for double investments in schooling, one for girls, the other for boys. Bangladesh, which has coeducational primary schools, has sped ahead while Pakistan continues to struggle with expanding separate access for both genders.

Lack of funding often prevents experimentation with innovative means of expanding schooling to difficult-to-reach groups or adapting effective programs to new contexts. A trust fund for multilateral programs targeting excluded girls could provide the financial basis for expanding successful efforts of donors and governments.

Donors could also play a catalytic role in devising and financing alternative schooling options, particularly for innovative programs for adolescent girls. Programs such as English language immersion classes or computer training provide an alternative to secondary school that equips girls with marketable skills. Creation of a girls' education evaluation fund to finance bilateral, multilateral, and nongovernmental organization evaluations of new or ongoing programs aimed at reaching girls would help fill a major gap and offer guidance to both policymakers and donors eager to use their resources to promote girls' education… .

Creating Incentives for Households to Send Girls to School

Cultural taboos, the opportunity cost of labor, low demand for education, and reluctance to allow children, especially girls, to enter mainstream schools contribute to low enrollment, low completion rates, and below-average achievement among excluded groups. Three types of programs—conditional cash transfers, girls' scholarships, and school feeding programs—have shown promise in meeting these challenges.

Conditional cash transfers provide resources to households to defray the costs of sending their children to school. They tie social assistance payments to desirable behaviors, in this case enrolling and keeping children in school. Although challenging to administer, conditional cash transfers provide financial incentives to families and put the onus on them to ensure that children actually go to school, something that school officials often find impossible to do. Robust evaluations have shown that conditional cash transfers increase both school enrollment and retention rates. Excluded groups, who are often more difficult to attract to these programs, have not been identified in these evaluations, so the impact on those groups is not yet known.

Scholarships for girls offer financing for primary and secondary school. They also encourage girls to stay in school. Scholarships compensate families for the direct and indirect costs of education. They are effective when households view cost as the impediment to girls' schooling. Scholarships also provide an additional revenue stream for secondary schools. They have been effective for girls at the secondary level in several countries, notably Bangladesh.

Various types of school feeding programs have been associated with higher attendance, higher enrollment, and, in some cases, lower dropout and higher student achievement. School feeding programs are most effective in meeting school attendance objectives. They are particularly successful where attendance is relatively low at the outset and children come from poor households. A concern, however, is whether school feeding provides additional nutrition or simply substitutes for home meals, particularly for girls; this issue deserves attention.

Governments and multilateral donors have forged partnerships for conditional cash transfers in many countries in Latin America. Expanding those initiatives to other countries and to difficult-to-reach groups could increase the number of excluded girls who attend school. How successful such programs can be in attracting excluded girls, especially adolescent girls, to school remains an open question. Donors could finance and manage household stipend components of conditional cash transfers for low-income countries that lack the managerial capacity and resources to conduct a conditional cash transfer program.

Scholarships for girls have demonstrated enormous promise. Donor initiatives to expand such programs to lower secondary, higher secondary, and tertiary education would increase the number of educated women in low-income countries. Educated women from disadvantaged households could serve as both community leaders and role models for excluded girls.

Stipends could be used to finance uniforms, school supplies, and books for girls—items parents often cannot afford or refuse to pay for because they do not appreciate their value. Providing assistance through stipends

avoids the bureaucratic management problems of subsidizing inputs.

Financing school meals can attract children to school. It can also provide employment for adults and help involve parents in school, reinforcing the school as a focus of community life. Such initiatives offer an entry point to help upgrade schools and provide the potential for additional help to children with faltering attendance or performance. School feeding programs have not been tested specifically among excluded groups. Donor funding could help determine whether these programs are effective among excluded children.

Notes

1. The excluded subgroups are: indigenous peoples in Guatemala, hill tribes in Laos, and Roma in the Slovak Republic.

2. Scheduled castes are the lowest caste populations in India and include the "untouchables." Scheduled tribes include indigenous people. They are both on a government schedule of disadvantaged groups, hence the name.

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READING 46

Globalization and the Growth of International Educational Testing and Assessment

David H. Kamens and Connie L. McNeely

Along with the spread of educational practices and curricula have come assessments of educational systems around the world. Key to comparative assessment is "international benchmarking," identifying what is considered necessary educational knowledge for a nation's needs, improvement, and global competitiveness. The measurement of student achievement with the use of national educational assessment and international testing indicates an agreement about the importance of testing and what is to be tested. The authors, David H. Kamens and Connie L. McNeely, point out that the significance of testing is the agreement that high levels of educational achievement, national assessment, and international testing are important in order for nations to compete in the global economy and the global "race to the top." In addition, it means that there is an agreed-upon body of knowledge to test globally. The implications are that nations are moving toward similar educational systems and standards.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Why are national assessment and international testing important for educational systems, and why has international testing spread rapidly throughout the world?
2. What can be done to increase international assessment, and what are the results of increased global assessment and testing?
3. How do the global assessment and testing movements relate to this chapter's first reading, "Educating All Children"?

Education has long been characterized as a central requirement for national economic development and political democratization in the contemporary world. Moreover, international benchmarking has been identified as the "basis for improvement… . It is only through such benchmarking that countries can understand relative strengths and weaknesses of their education systems and identify best practices and ways forward" (OECD 2006, 18). Statements such as this example signal an international consensus that has emerged—at least among "developed" countries—about the legitimacy and, even more so, the necessity of international testing and national assessment. As David P. Baker and Gerald K. LeTendre (2005) observe, both international testing and national assessment are linked to efforts to reform educational systems and are often themselves stimuli for further cycles of reform. The results of international testing, they note, will fuel further interest in national assessment.

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Here we develop an argument about the global forces that have led to the explosive growth of national educational assessment and international testing. In particular, we argue that the international acceptance of

testing comes from key ideological forces in the world polity that are associated with the accelerating globalization of national and international cultural, economic, and political structures. As we develop and warrant this argument, we also qualify it by pointing out that national adaptations to this larger world culture may vary depending on the presence and capacities of international organizations and regional associations that act to mediate and adapt these changes to conditions in individual countries. In addition, we consider the effects of subnational movements in introducing pressures for change that may favor more national assessment.

The Spread of International Testing and National Assessment

During the past 40 years, the number of countries participating in international testing for learning in mathematics, science, and reading has increased dramatically, with participation growing among both developed and developing countries (Kamens and McNeely 2007). Indeed, by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, over a third of the world's countries will be using standardized tests to assess their middle school and high school student achievement. Still, 65 percent of the countries in the world are not yet involved in international testing, so we must also address the possibilities of limits to this trend.

Two other facts about participation are especially telling. First, countries that score poorly in early rounds of international testing typically continue to participate in later rounds. Second, low-scoring countries that drop out often turn to international governmental organizations (IGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to assist them in conducting national assessments (McNeely and Cha 1994; McNeely 1995; Martens 2005). Thus, the "need" to test or assess student populations is spreading as a taken-for-granted assumption. Moreover, an expanding number of donor agencies and multilateral organizations are mandating some form of learning assessment to accompany their loans and other aid support.[1] Often involving cooperation with organizations that provide technical advice and support, testing is increasingly viewed as an obligation of nation-states. National ministries of education typically act as the agents imposing this activity on schools and education systems.

In addition to the growth of international testing, national learning assessment is growing rapidly, especially in mathematics and language and more so at the primary and lower secondary levels. This trend is occurring not only among the more affluent countries but also among the poorer ones. For example, the Dominican Republic has engaged in a long-term assessment project with the help of the Educational Evaluation Research Consortium and with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Similarly, both Latin American and African countries have regional assessment programs funded by UNESCO. The Latin American Association for the Assessment of the Quality of Education, founded in 1994, now has 19 members. The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), started in 1990, has 15 member countries; seven of them participated in its first assessment study in 1995–97, and 14 were involved in 2000–2003 studies. Similarly, Francophone Africa has the Conference des Ministres de l'Éducation des Pays Ayant le Français en Partage (CONFEMEN), which encourages and assists member states in performing national assessments.

In 2006 and 2007, UNESCO gathered the most authoritative data to date on the spread of national learning assessments, which tend to focus on how well the intended curriculum is taught and learned. These data show that, across virtually all world regions, national assessments are a rapidly growing phenomenon (Benavot and Tanner 2007). From 1995 to 2005, the number of countries carrying out learning assessments more than doubled, from 28 to 67. And although developed countries continue to have the highest rates, developing countries have almost doubled their rates of learning assessments (from 28 to 51 percent). While "in transition" countries have the lowest levels of assessments, they too, increased in participation over the 10-year

span, from 0 to 17 (43 percent).[2] Even "fragile states" have begun to carry out national assessments, with 15 of 35 (43 percent)—half located in East Asia and the Pacific—having done so by 2005.[3]

Nevertheless, there are regional differences in conducting national assessments. In the 1990s, the lowest rates were in sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia. During the same period, much of southeastern sub-Saharan Africa began conducting national assessments. As of 2005, North America and Western Europe had the highest rates of assessments, followed by Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia, and Latin America. Most of Latin America began national assessment testing in the 1990s. Between 1995 and 2006, the Middle East Arab states, together with South and West Asia, had particularly dramatic increases in their rates (from 15 to 55 percent and from 11 to 44 percent, respectively).

The rapid pattern of growth of national learning assessments looks similar to that of international testing. For instance, while developed countries are leading the use of learning assessments, developing countries—including the most fragile states—are catching up. Additionally, even in regions where almost no international testing has been done, large proportions of countries conduct national assessments.[4] Countries in Francophone Africa and the Caribbean are particularly striking examples of this pattern—few participate in international testing, but all have conducted national assessments. Finally, the subjects covered in national assessments have been almost identical to those addressed in international testing: mathematics, language, and civics or social studies. This pattern is not surprising since these subjects and science constitute the bulk of the curriculum of grades 1–6, in which much international testing and most national assessments are done (Meyer et al. 1992; Benavot and Tanner 2007).

Despite critics and controversies, it appears that international testing and national assessment have become relatively commonplace across different countries. These initiatives are works in progress, however, and one can expect the related methodology, as well as the breadth of the testing subject matter, to evolve. While comparative interest in national examination systems actually dates back to the late nineteenth century (Meyer et al. 1992; Eckstein and Noah 1993; McNeely and Cha 1994), formal international testing is largely a post–World War II project based in part on technological advances and the availability of sophisticated testing methods and computing capabilities that have made large-scale data collection and analysis possible.

Technological capability is only part of the story. Consider the following scenario: in a world where national educational systems are viewed as unique in structure, history, and purpose, international testing would have little plausibility. In fact, this view was the dominant perspective when Torsten Husén and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) first conducted international math and science testing in the 1960s. Husén (1967) himself saw the purpose of these studies as investigating national differences in educational systems, which he argued were due to unique educational and cultural histories. Since that time, there has been a change in perspective; testing and assessment no longer seem like a case of comparing apples to oranges (UNESCO 1986).

For example, in the past, countries with centralized educational systems were most likely to implement national examination systems. These examination systems, however, were designed to select students for further education, not to assess the curriculum and its implementation (Eckstein and Noah 1993). Times have

changed, and now the emphasis is more typically on the use of testing and assessment to judge the adequacy of educational systems to deliver desired outcomes (Travers and Westbury 1989). In this new environment, it is not clear that distinctions among nation-states and among their educational systems will have such strong impacts on the spread of national assessment and testing. Among the most developed countries, for instance, we have seen that almost all—ranging from those with highly centralized education systems, like France, to those with more decentralized systems, like the United States—do a lot of international testing and national assessment (Baker and LeTendre 2005; Benavot and Tanner 2007). In spite of differences in state structure and the organization of education, the pressure and tendency to test and assess seem equally prevalent. The trend cuts across different types of educational systems—for example, a class-based educational system in France (see discussions in Bowles and Gintis [1976]; Kamens, Meyer, and Benavot [1992]; Rubinson and Fuller [1992]; and Prasad [2005]) and a mass-credentialing system like that in the United States (Collins 1979).

Conclusions

It seems clear that international testing is increasing, and the limited data on national assessment suggest that it has also expanded since the 1990s. It seems that fewer and fewer countries imagine that they will achieve the status of the "good society" without high levels of formal education and accompanying efforts at national assessment and/or international testing. Thirty-five percent of countries now do international testing, but many more are conducting some form of national assessment. According to Benavot and Tanner (2007), 81 percent of developed countries have conducted national assessments as of 2006, and 51 percent of developing countries have also done so. Most of the former also have participated in international achievement testing. About 43 percent of the poorest countries have not done international testing but have completed one or more national assessments. Thus, national assessments are the major growth sector of international testing and will probably continue to expand.

While there may be debates about the forms that education should take, evidence on rising national enrollment levels across the world indicate that no country's elites can envision a successful future without high levels of popular education. Moreover, with notions of education for all come increased pressures for educational accountability. Accordingly, we expect that national assessment will spread and that international testing also will continue to expand in keeping with increasing globalization and world polity cultural dynamics and social relations.

In particular, we have posited the diffusion of international educational testing and national assessment on the basis of three principal cultural features of the world polity: (1) ideologies of education as a source of national and world progress, (2) the hegemony of science as a critical means to development, and (3) the idea that educational systems—and, indeed, society in general—can be managed to produce desirable outcomes… . [I]ncreased testing and assessment result from pressures to rationalize education and schooling, with IGOs, NGOs, regional associations, and subnational movements operating as agents of diffusion.

As societal rationalization proceeds and education expands, new domains of assessment are likely to become common. The difficulty will lie in deciding the limits on learning that students should be expected to master (World Bank 2005). Also, given the worldwide expansion of higher education (Schofer and Meyer 2005), it is very likely that the urge to assess will expand to cover additional levels of education. For example, countries might seek information on how their systems of higher education compare with one another (cf. OECD 2008).

National assessment is also likely to expand. Both political elites and external organizations, such as IGOs and NGOs, will facilitate the process as well as demand accountability and evidence of educational effectiveness in exchange for resources. Moreover, since the biggest differences in test scores are linked to issues of democracy within countries, such as access and equality, assessments and comparisons could help in evaluating school policies, constructing models of schooling and teacher practices, and providing educators and the public with contextually sensitive accounts of exposure and learning levels (e.g., Downey et al. 2008).

As previously mentioned, constraints on testing and assessment also exist. While constraints may weaken in the world polity environment, they will not necessarily disappear. In the case of international testing, we have noted at least two practical impediments that must be considered. First, an important problem is the fundamental lack of resources and lack of organizational capacity to administer this complex activity. As more standardization of testing regimes is required, more administrative capability and expertise are also needed to carry out related activities. Sampling designs, test construction, translation, and so on all become complex and important issues. Poor countries simply may not have the necessary resources to coordinate and undertake these activities. Thus, to date, many developing countries have been absent from the populations of countries in which international testing has occurred. Second, engaging in testing opens a country to external scrutiny and may also intensify internal conflicts over perceived responsibilities for inadequate or unequal educational outcomes. Even the most amenable elites in such societies may feel that such comparisons are premature and dangerous at a time when they may be trying to devise school systems and curricula that bridge gaps among groups in their countries.

Nevertheless, the spread of international testing has produced its own dynamic in shaping educational systems, and the modern obsession with education produces intense interest in testing and assessment around the world (McKnight et al. 1987; Stevenson and Stigler 1992; Baker and LeTendre 2005). This is one of the institutionalizations of education and of its "transcendental" character. No matter how well students perform on international tests, educators and political elites are constantly looking for ways to improve their educational systems (Baker and LeTendre 2005). In the context of a globalizing economy, every country is looking for an edge that makes it more competitive. Accordingly, all countries have the urge to compare and compete.

In this global environment, it is difficult to imagine what forces would restrain the urge among national elites to assess and test. World polity culture will continue to spread, even in the face of global economic downturn. This perspective privileges education as integral to democracy and human rights, stimulating demands for both educational expansion and educational accountability. Thus, the drive to assess and test is built into modern education, and both assessment and testing are likely to increase as more countries become more fully integrated into the world polity.

Notes

1. Aaron Benavot, personal communication, July 2009.

2. "In transition" or "transitional" countries are those attempting to change their basic constitutional elements toward market-style fundamentals (IMF 2000). Countries and territories in transition include the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, and Ukraine, plus the more "advanced" developing countries, namely, the Bahamas, Bermuda, Brunei, the Cayman Islands, Cyprus, the Falkland Islands, Hong Kong, Israel, Kuwait, Qatar, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates. Some World Bank studies also include Mongolia (IMF 2000; DFID 2009).

3. States are considered "fragile" when their governments cannot or will not deliver core functions to their people, with a focus on the "weak capacity and/or lack of political will to provide services and to sustain a development partnership with the international community" (Vallings and Moreno-Torres 2005, 4).

4. National assessment may be a widely respected substitute for participation in international "highstakes" testing because the former (*a*) has higher utility for policy elites, providing useful national and subnational evidence on the functioning of teachers and regional school systems; (*b*) is more relevant in given countries' curricula; and (*r*) may avoid problems associated with international testing and comparison (e.g., potential political humiliation and high costs).

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READING 47

Too Many Children Left Behind

The U.S. Achievement Gap in Comparative Perspective

Bruce Bradbury, Miles Corak, Jane Waldfogel, and Elizabeth Washbrook

Once upon a time, children in the United States did well educationally compared with other countries, but that advantage has dwindled, and those countries most similar to the United States in language and culture are outscoring U.S. children on comparative tests. This article is about the land of "opportunity for all" and what is happening to that theme of U.S. culture in education. In recent years, a number of international tests (see Reading 46, Kamens and McNeely) show the United States lagging behind, with higher inequality in students' achievement than Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, all of which also have diverse populations. The reading addresses this achievement gap between countries from school entry at around 4 to 5 years of age to middle school years. It attributes difference in achievement to many factors, including age of parents and stability of marriages, reading to children, degree of family support from public sectors, availability of universal health care and child benefits, paid parental leave at birth, and even free preschool and other school policies. The article suggests policy changes and social support systems can lead to more opportunity for U.S. children.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What can a comparison of countries with similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds tell us about differences in student achievement?
2. What evidence from this and other readings in this section and from your own observations indicate why the United States is falling behind?
3. What can the United States learn from similar countries with higher international test scores?

THE AMERICAN DREAM—the idea that all children should be able to succeed regardless of the economic circumstances into which they were born—is widely shared by parents in the United States, as well as in many other countries. Parents want the best for their children, and society as a whole has an interest in seeing all children reach their fullest potential without being held back by the circumstances of their birth.

From *Too Many Children Left Behind: The U.S. Achievement Gap in Comparative Perspective* (pp. 1–20), by B. Bradbury, M. Corak, J. Waldfogel, and E. Washbrook, New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Copyright 2015 by Russell Sage Foundation. Reprinted with permission.

But is the American Dream a reality? Is it a reality for just some and not others? If the American Dream is not widely attainable, what can the United States do—if anything—to make opportunity a reality for all Americans? And what can this country learn from other countries in meeting this challenge? …

We answer these questions by focusing on the development and progress of children during the primary school years and in some cases beyond. We look at their starting point on the cusp of formal schooling at age four or five, describe their accomplishments in their early teen years, and chart the ups and downs of their development in between. Another way we answer these questions is by making two types of comparisons: between children raised by families at different rungs on the ladder of socioeconomic success, and between children in the United States and children in three similar countries—Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. We very intentionally chose these three countries for this comparative analysis because culturally, historically, and institutionally they have a good deal in common, and also because there has long been a good deal of communication and borrowing of policy ideas between their governments. Is there as much inequality in the development of more- and less-advantaged children in these peer countries as there is in the United States? Or do the experiences of Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom suggest that the United States could do better?

The American Dream, Luck, and Opportunity

"Equality of opportunity" and "opportunity for all" are central themes of a compelling story that Americans tell themselves—a story about their children's futures, but also a story about the country.

It is a story about hope—the hope that with hard work and perseverance, children will become all that they can be. But it is also a story about fairness—the rules of a game in which success is sometimes determined by circumstances beyond one's control.

Sometimes luck, good or bad, sets people on a path in life that they did not anticipate and may certainly not have chosen. Opportunity is a matter of chance, and "down on your luck" is a phrase that, in many different ways, has real meaning. But at the same time, "good luck comes to those who work hard" is not just a hollow mantra: it can be a powerful explanation for one's station in life (Last Voices Channel, 2009).

Americans do not believe that luck is the central ingredient of success. In a public opinion poll designed to explore attitudes toward the American Dream and how people can move up the income ladder, only about one-fifth of respondents said that luck is essential or very important, but about 90 percent said that hard work and ambition are important. The same poll asked what the American Dream means and found that Americans feel that financial security is certainly a part of the definition, but not the most important part. For many, the American Dream is linked to equality of opportunity and means "being able to succeed regardless of the economic circumstances in which you were born" and, relatedly, "being free to accomplish anything you want with hard work."

Whatever the case in reality, Americans believe that the pathway to success is not about good luck, but about hard work and ambition. Nevertheless, overwhelming proportions of Americans also feel that having a good education, and having access to quality schooling from kindergarten through high school, is essential, or at least very important, to getting ahead in life. In short, ambition, hard work, and the opportunity to get a good education are the ingredients of upward mobility and the chance to attain the American Dream.

Americans want their children to have these ingredients for success.

But hard work can't always overcome bad luck, and children in particular have no responsibility for the circumstances that ultimately determine their capacities and skills: the circumstances of their birth and the schools and communities in which they are raised. If Americans do not come to appreciate the details of how children develop the capacity to become all that they can be, the compelling story they tell themselves about equality of opportunity and the future of America's children will remain more of a dream than a reality… .

Opportunity for All?

… Children's success in school, and in life, is very much tied to their family background, and more so in the United States than in other countries.

We draw this conclusion from a range of U.S. and international evidence that has accumulated over the last decade or so as increasing attention has been focused on how countries fare with regard to not only their average school achievement but also inequality in achievement. In the United States, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, the landmark federal education reform enacted in 2001, set the goal that states should not only raise their average levels of student proficiency but also close achievement gaps—that is, gaps in test scores between less- and more-advantaged groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). And across countries, international reports from comparative test series such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) generate headlines not just about how countries rank on average but also about how their lowest- and highest-performing students fare (Carnoy & Rothstein 2013).

Results from international test score data indicate that the United States has a problem with inequality of student achievement, and more so than peer countries, including the three we focus on here (Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom). But because these results draw on tests administered to fifteen-year-olds (or adults), they cannot tell us about inequality in the all-important early childhood period, nor about how inequality develops between early childhood and adolescence. Do children from different backgrounds start school on relatively equal footing but then see their paths diverge as they move through school? Or are children starting school already unequal? If so, what happens to that inequality over time? And as children move through the school years, is inequality growing for children of all initial ability levels, or is it particularly the children who started out with the greatest challenges, or those who had the most potential, who feel the lack of socioeconomic resources most keenly?

To address these questions, we make use of large-scale and very detailed surveys that follow cohorts of children over time in each of our four countries. In particular, we make use of assessments of the children when they are age four or five, at around the time of school entry, and then repeated assessments at later ages as they move through school. We can follow all our children to at least the age of eleven, at the time they are finishing up primary school, and we can follow our U.S. children even further, to age fourteen, when they are about to enter secondary school.

Our focus is on the gaps in achievement between children of different family backgrounds, and how those gaps in the United States compare to those in our three other countries. We do not argue that societies should try to compensate for all the different sources of unequal opportunity. For many characteristics, this is neither politically nor even scientifically possible. But we do wish to explore the impact of some important and potentially modifiable social and economic resources. Cross-national comparisons provide a powerful tool for exploring the economic and social policies that are feasible in modem societies. Our four countries share a common culture and economic system, and a similarly wide distribution of parental and family personal

capabilities. As we shall see, however, the gaps in outcomes between children from different socioeconomic backgrounds do vary significantly across these countries. Although it might not be possible to eliminate all of the inequality of opportunity associated with genes and families, our comparative cases illustrate that there are other countries similar in many respects to the United States where gaps between families of different socioeconomic backgrounds are significantly smaller… .

Our Major Questions

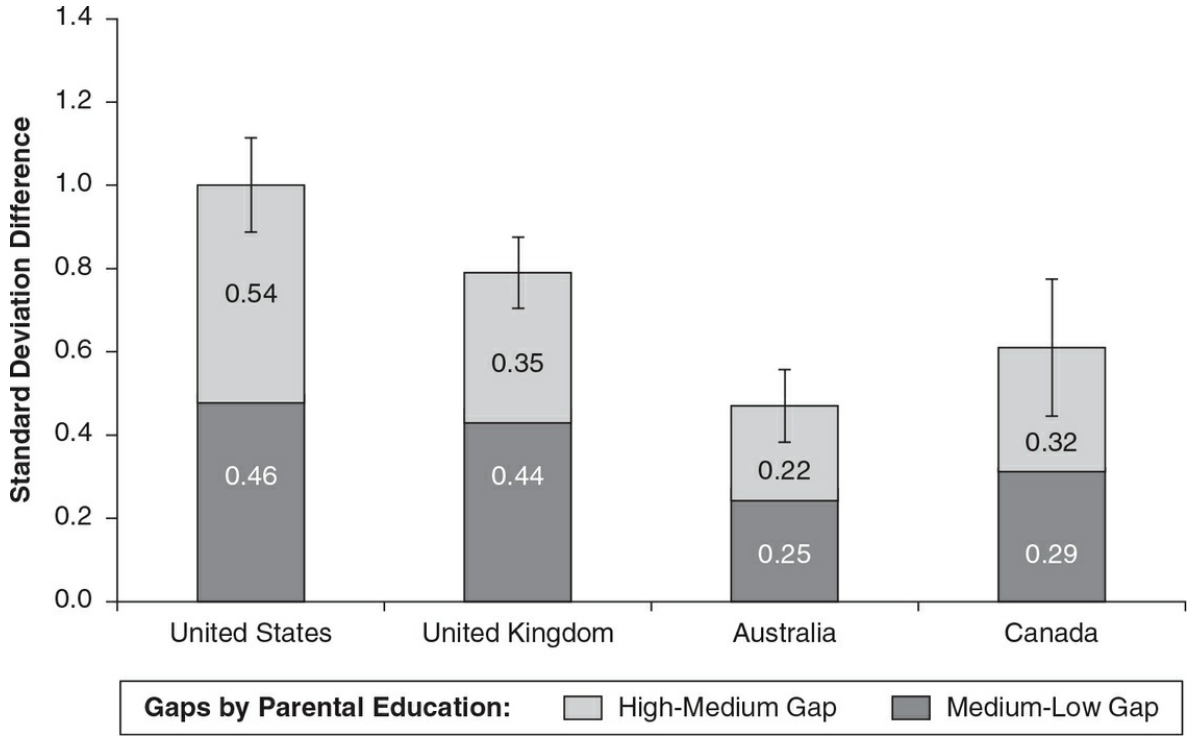
It is our intention … to answer three sets of questions about the U.S. achievement gap.

1. *How large is the achievement gap between children from low-SES families and those from high-SES families?*

We estimate that the degree of inequality of opportunity is significant in the United States. Family background is significantly related to the competencies of young children, both at school entry and in eighth grade. Children from low-SES families lag behind their counterparts from high-SES families, in both reading and math, by a full standard deviation at school entry (see Figure 47.1). Elsewhere, the situation is different. Succeeding regardless of the economic circumstances into which one is born is more likely in Australia and, particularly, Canada than in the United Slates or the United Kingdom.

In some of these countries, inequality is a more serious problem for boys than for girls. This is not the case in the United States or Australia, but does hold with regard to some outcomes we examine in the United Kingdom and Canada.

Figure 47.1 Inequality in language/reading skills at ages four and five is greater in the United States than in other comparable countries.



Source: Authors' calculations using data from the ECLS-K, MCS, LSAC-K, and NLSCY.

Notes: The figure shows the gaps in average language and reading test scores between children from families with different levels of parental education. The "high–medium gap" is the difference between

children with a college-educated parent and those whose parents have only some college. The "medium–low gap" is the difference between children with a parent with some college and children whose parents have no more than a high school degree. The total length of each bar is the "high–low gap"—the difference between children with a college-educated parent and those whose parents have no more than a high school degree. Test scores are standardized in all countries to have mean zero and unit variance. Black lines are 95 percent confidence intervals for the high–low gap (the total length of the bar).

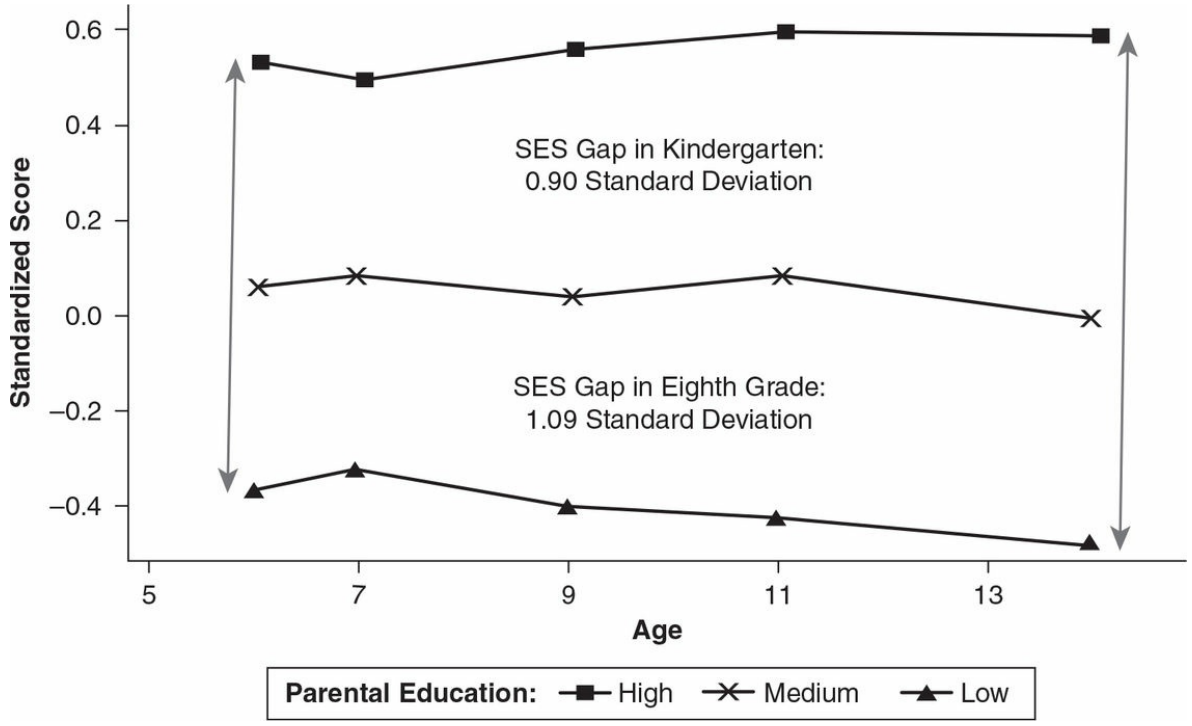
2. *When does this gap emerge? How much inequality is already present at school entry? What happens to the gap as children move through school?*

The gap between the achievement of the average child from a family in which one parent has a college degree or more and that of the average child from a family with at most a high school diploma is already significant before these children start kindergarten. During the school years the gap between them never narrows, but on average it also does not widen by very much (see Figure 47.2).

These average patterns, however, conceal another fact: the children of families lower on the socioeconomic ladder actually do not make as much progress as those who start out with the same ability at school entry but whose parents are more educated (see Figure 47.3). The potential displayed by high-achieving low-SES children in kindergarten tends to wither away over time, while high-SES children who started off below average seem able to make up ground on other children during the school years.

Children's positions in the achievement distribution actually move around a lot during the school years, with many either surging ahead or dropping behind for short periods. We would expect this fluidity to weaken the association between family background and children's achievement over time. The fact that it does not—that the gaps do not narrow—implies a cumulative effect of socioeconomic status that continues well beyond the preschool period into adolescence. We estimate that some 30 to 40 percent of the gaps we observe at the start of high school can be attributed to factors that only come into play *after* children enter school.

Figure 47.2 Average reading scores of U.S. children from different SES groups—and the gaps between them—change relatively little between kindergarten and eighth grade.

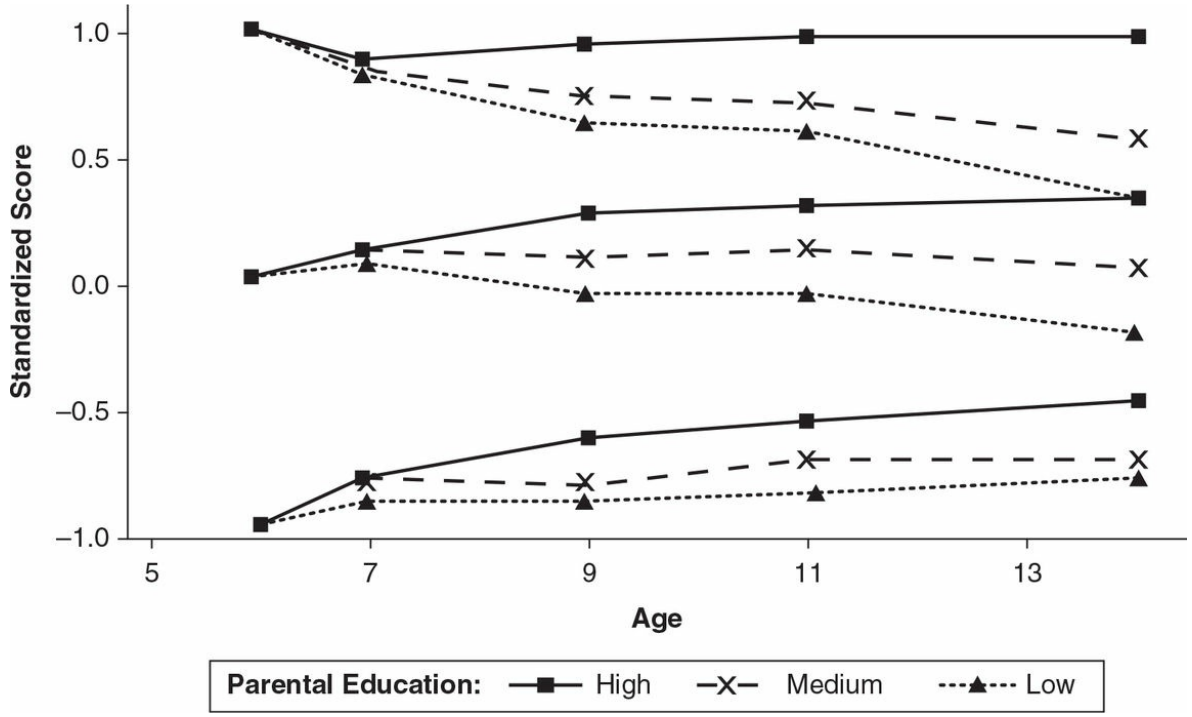


Source: Authors' calculations using the ECLS-K.

Notes: The chart plots the average standardized reading scores of children from the three SES groups, defined by their parents' level of education, at spring kindergarten (age six), first grade (age seven), third grade (age nine), fifth grade(age eleven), and eighth grade (age fourteen). The "SES gap" is the difference in average scores of children in the low-SES group (parents have only a high school degree or less) and the high-SES group (at least one parent has a college degree).

It is important to note that the factors driving the gaps during the school years might have to do with schools, they might reflect the influence of factors outside of schools, or they might stem from a combination of the two. So the fact that gaps do not narrow during the school years does not mean that schools are not playing an equalizing role. It might be that gaps would grow even wider in the absence of schooling, and in fact there is evidence to support this interpretation in the phenomenon of "summer learning loss": low-SES children often lose ground relative to their more-advantaged peers during the summer, when they are not in school. Gaps during the school years might also reflect the increasing importance of early differences in vocabulary and background knowledge to children's test scores in the later elementary school years and beyond as they make the transition from learning to read to reading to learn.

Figure 47.3 Over time, achievement gaps emerge between low- and high-SES children who start school with the same level of reading ability—high-SES children always develop an advantage, whether they start with high, average, or low ability in kindergarten.



Source: Authors' calculations using the ECLS-K

Notes: The lines depict the predicted scores in grades 1 through 8 (at ages seven through fourteen) of children with three specific reading test scores in kindergarten (+1, 0, and −1 standard deviation above the mean). We allowed the predicted scores associated with a given initial score to differ with SES. We calculated a quadratic relationship between spring kindergarten score and later test score separately for each group (with fall kindergarten scores used as instruments to correct for measurement error) and generated predictions from these models. Shared areas are 95 percent confidence intervals that indicate the precision with which we can predict later outcomes.

3. *What can the United States learn from other countries about making children more successful regardless of family background? More broadly put, does it have to be this way?*

Our three country examples provide interesting points of comparison. Although we cannot say precisely which factors account for their greater equality of opportunity, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom do provide proof that the outcomes of children from different backgrounds can be more equal than they are in the United States today.

Canada and, to a lesser extent, Australia have more equality among the children than the United States does. Their smaller SES gaps are present already in early childhood and persist through the school years. Compared to the United States, low-SES families in Canada and Australia have more resources for children—the parents are older, are more likely to be married or residing together, and have higher incomes. In Canada, parents are also more likely to read to the children. Low-SES children in both Canada and Australia also receive more supports from the public sector. Both now provide universal health insurance as well as child

benefit programs that provide income support to families with children. Both countries provide substantial paid parental leave to allow new parents to stay home with their infants. Australia provides free universal preschool; Canada does as well in some provinces.

The U.K. example is also informative. Like the United States, the United Kingdom has a lot of inequality between families, and this is reflected in a fairly large SES gap in achievement before school entry. The fact that the SES gap in children's achievement in the United Kingdom is not as large as it is in the United States may be due to more universal supports for low-SES families, such as universal health insurance, universal preschool, child benefits, and so on. The United Kingdom also appears to be a country where the SES gap may narrow during the primary school years, unlike the situation in the United States. This may be due to the United Kingdom's more uniform national curriculum as well as recent school reforms that emphasize raising the achievement of low-SES children and provide extra funds to schools to help them accomplish this goal.

One common—and surprising—finding across countries is that the majority of the SES achievement gap is already present at school entry… . we expected to find that at least half the gap in achievement would emerge during the school years. But to our surprise, most of the gap in skills between low- and high-SES children, and most of the difference in the magnitude of that gap across countries, was already present at school entry. This has important implications for the timing and nature of policy remedies.

Because the majority of the achievement gap between low- and high-SES children has its origins prior to school entry, addressing the gap clearly will require interventions in early childhood. In particular, there is an important role for evidence-based parenting programs and preschool programs, as well as income support programs to reduce poverty and financial strain among families with preschool-age children. Such programs would go a long way toward evening out the disparities in resources available to young children in the United States and, in turn, the disparities in their early development. And reducing those early gaps would make it easier to combat inequality during the school years, since children would come to school on a more even footing and with a greater likelihood of being among peers who, like them, are better prepared.

But there is also a role for policies to address inequality during the school years. Both within and beyond our four countries, what is now a considerable body of evidence on school policies that help promote equity suggests that the following school reform policies would be most effective in helping to reduce SES achievement gaps: recruiting, supporting, and adequately compensating more effective teachers; implementing more rigorous curricula; and raising expectations and providing more support for low-achieving children. There may also be a role for extending the school day or school year.

Inequality during the school years may also reflect the influence of out-of-school factors. The family, community, and public-sector factors that are important in early achievement are also likely to play a role in achievement during the school years. So there is also a role for policies that provide support for student learning outside of school, from after-school and summer programs to help address out-of-school learning differentials to income support programs to help ease financial pressures and stresses on families.

Conclusion

Children from low-SES families face considerable challenges, and more so in the United States than in other countries. Their parents not only lack education but also tend to be younger, to live in less stable families, and to have lower incomes. These initial inequalities are augmented by a less active social safety net than is provided by peer countries. Unlike their counterparts in other countries, less-advantaged families in the United States do not have paid parental 1eave, universal preschool, reliable income supports, or (until recently) access to universal health insurance. It is little wonder that their children come to school less ready than higher-SES children, and further behind than their peers in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Once they are in school, children from low-SES families face school systems that struggle with widely disparate readiness among their students and with many other children with similar family backgrounds. Low-SES children also attend schools that, reflecting residential segregation, are segregated by income and have fewer school resources, including important inputs like teacher quality. So again, it is little wonder that gaps across social groupings are not closing during the school years and, if anything, are widening instead.

But the challenge to equal opportunity in the United States is not just driven by the situation of low-SES families. Something is going on at the middle and the top as well.

For children from high-SES families, it is in many ways the best of times. Not only are their parents highly educated, they also are more likely than parents in other families to be married, and they have much higher incomes than such families had in the past or than such families have in other countries. Sociologist Sara McLanahan calls this a pattern of "diverging destinies": families and other resources have been increasingly concentrated in the high-SES families, while the low-SES families have become increasingly disadvantaged. In addition to having more resources, high SES families are also investing a larger share of their resources in their children in a phenomenon that we have likened to an arms race. The result is high-SES children pulling away from others—pulling away not just from the low-SES children but also from those in the middle.

Meanwhile, the families in the middle are experiencing what we call a "middle-class squeeze." Parents are working long hours but not seeing income gains. Nor do they receive much support from government policies relative to their counterparts in other countries. They do not receive universal paid parental leave or universal preschool, and until recently they did not have access to universal health insurance. They fear that the schools their children attend are just mediocre, but they do not have the resources available to the more affluent to supplement school with out-of-school enrichment activities and summer programs or move their children to private school. Parents in the middle worry about whether their children will do well enough to get into a good college, and they worry about how they will manage to pay for it. Thus, to close the unacceptably large achievement gap in the United States will require doing something about achievement not only for children from low-SES families but also those from middle-SES families. Both groups are struggling, and not doing as well as their peers in other countries. That is why we favor policies that will help a broad range of families rather than ones narrowly targeted at the most disadvantaged. To this end, we emphasize three key policy directions for the United States:

1. Provide more support for early learning through more widespread availability of evidence-based parenting programs for families with infants and toddlers and through universal preschool for three- and four-year-olds
2. Raise family incomes for the poor and near-poor through measures such as increasing the minimum wage and expanding the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit
3. Improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools by recruiting, supporting, and adequately compensating more effective teachers, implementing more rigorous curricula, and setting higher expectations and providing more support for low-achieving students.

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Projects for Further Exploration

1. Various tests are used to compare academic achievement across countries. Using an academic database, search *international*, *test results*, and *education* to find a listing of test results across countries. How do students from the United States compare with those from other countries?
2. Using the Web, look up at least two colleges or universities from three countries in different regions of the world. Compare the criteria for admission, curriculum offerings, methods for funding education, and format for instruction in these three different countries.
3. Interview a student or person from another country. Ask the interviewee about the structure of educational systems in his or her country and how the educational system there prepares students for entry into the workforce.

Chapter 11 Can Schools Change?: Educational Reform and Change

Throughout this book, we have examined various parts of the open systems model. Many of these readings point to places in the model where educational change and reform are desirable. In this chapter, we conclude by focusing on the "whole" education system and looking at the possibility of change. These four readings include philosophical, political, and practical commentaries on the educational system and pose fundamental questions about the limits and possibilities of school reform.

But why even discuss change—or reform—in education when sociologists define institutions as *stable* clusters of roles, norms, processes, and values? From this perspective, the tendency is for the institution of education to remain "as is," rather than to change. In studying the history of transformation in the education system, Tyack and Cuban (1995) found that change in the structure of schooling is complicated and likely to be rejected because the desire for change often conflicts other people's desires to keep things as they are. Yet in taking a broad historical perspective, we see that many disruptive changes from the past have now become all too familiar aspects of the educational system and now form the basis of what we take for granted as fundamental to what school is all about. One such example is the graded school, which began in 1860; prior to that, students of all ages and abilities were educated in blended environments, without assumptions of passing from one level to the next, year after year. Another example is the school calendar: today, many take for granted the notion that the school year runs from September (or August) to June. But what if a different model actually contributed to greater learning and educational equity?

Despite the long-term stability within the educational system, periodic change and efforts at reform are also part of the story. The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education began what some have called the first modern wave of reform. This report called for tightening requirements for students and qualifications for teachers. This was followed by calls from the National Governors Association for school restructuring, including school-based management and school choice. In the late 1980s, when these efforts had not produced results, the National Governors Association redefined goals for American schools. These goals called for systemic reform at all levels of education using both top-down and bottom-up strategies for implementation, including outcome-based education (Dougherty & Hall, 1997). The next wave of reform was initiated in 1989 with the specification of eight goals that were set to be reached in the year 2000. "Goals 2000" focused on outcomes such as higher graduation rates and improved performance, including higher achievement in mathematics and science. Not surprisingly, these goals were accompanied by a focus on evaluation and assessment. The year 2000 arrived, and again, these goals had not been reached.

The emphasis on testing and accountability gained strength in 2001, with the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) under President George W. Bush. Many consider this the most thorough and aggressive implementation of federal education reform at the state and local level. With some modifications, this thrust remained with the implementation of Race to the Top and its emphasis on Common Core in 2009, under

President Barack Obama and his secretary of education, Arne Duncan. These latest reforms include some changes to curriculum and pedagogy but retain an emphasis on measurement and quantification, with demonstration of student learning and teacher effectiveness at the heart of the initiative.

All too often we get caught up on issues within schools and forget why they became issues in the first place. Several readings in this chapter ask us to take a step back and consider a broader perspective when critiquing schools and school reform. First, in a classic piece from 1971, Ivan Illich proposes an entirely different system of schooling and challenges the need for traditional forms of schooling. Instead of calling for reforms that tinker along the edges of the education system, Illich calls for radical changes in the way we "do" education. Illich argues for abolishing traditional schooling and replacing it with an entirely elective system in which individuals can learn whenever they wish from whomever they wish. While he understands the need for humans to be educated, he does not believe that this education needs to take place within the context of schooling. Although his proposals stand little chance of implementation in the near or even distant future, Illich's perspective is useful in raising questions about what we are trying to accomplish in our schools.

Douglas B. Downey and Benjamin G. Gibbs similarly raise fundamental questions about the education system and possibilities for reform. While teachers and the educational system are targets of both praise and intense criticism, few take a step back and ask what we should expect of schools, given the context of a society that is deeply unequal and plagued by poverty. Indeed, schools often operate as ameliorative institutions, stepping in and attempting to correct inequalities that emerge from elsewhere in society. Downey and Gibbs point out that schools actually do a fairly good job in reducing race and class inequalities in achievement. Perhaps they could do an even better job if fundamental reforms in the school calendar were adopted (namely, by reducing the length of summer break), which some research suggests would help close race and social class gaps in achievement. This reform seems unlikely, though, given the entrenched institutional forces that maintain the school calendar, as is.

Michael Apple engages the question of school reform on a broader, political level. He encourages observers to take the position of the least advantaged within society, an act called *repositioning*. Doing so, he argues, would lead us to question the fundamental assumptions about school reform and see through the political rhetoric while refocusing attention on the lives, perspectives, and futures of those who occupy the most vulnerable positions in society.

The final reading in this chapter returns us to yet another sociological lesson about school reform: some of the most well-intentioned changes to the system come with unintended consequences. Even as educators develop new curriculum and new modes of instruction, some of the enduring challenges to and critiques of the educational system remain. In Joanne Golann's piece on "no-excuses" charter schools, we see that efforts to close race and social class gaps in educational achievement may have unintended behavioral consequences. She worries that no-excuses schools, with their high levels of discipline unwittingly turn students into passive learners. Like Downey and Gibbs, her research prompts us to think about the degree to which educational reforms can achieve their goals within the context of an unequal society.

We are, of course, providing but a brief glimpse into an area about which many studies and reports proposing

educational reform have been written, especially involving the critical role that teachers play in the implementation and success of any educational reform. As you read this chapter, recall the open systems model proposed in the introduction to this book. Think about how each element of the open systems model facilitates as well as inhibits change. We hope these readings stoke your creative juices and provide a framework for you to look at the parts of the educational system and envision the future of education in new and productive ways.

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READING 48

Deschooling Society

Ivan Illich

It is appropriate to include in this final chapter a reading by one of the more creative thinkers on educational reform of the 20th century. In this excerpt from his book of the same title, Ivan Illich proposes a totally different educational system; one that does not rely on schooling as we know it. While he acknowledged the fundamental need for education, Illich separated education from the context in which it occurs, which is schooling. Published in 1971, this work became a classic, and it provides an interesting way to rethink the function and structure of schools. Illich's idea of deschooling society provides an approach to developing a system that provides the opportunity for true learning, social justice, and personal development. We hope this reading stimulates your imagination and raises many questions as you consider the possibility for change in education.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What parts of education does Illich find to be most harmful? What theoretical perspective does this reflect?
2. Describe the type of education Illich would like to see in society.
3. What do you know about schools as educational organizations from other readings in this book that would make Illich's reforms difficult to implement?

Equal educational opportunity is, indeed, both a desirable and a feasible goal, but to equate this with obligatory schooling is to confuse salvation with the Church. School has become the world religion of a modernized proletariat, and makes futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age. The nation-state has adopted it, drafting all citizens into a graded curriculum leading to sequential diplomas not unlike the initiation rituals and hieratic promotions of former times. The modern state has assumed the duty of enforcing the judgment of its educators through well-meant truant officers and job requirements, much as did the Spanish kings who enforced the judgments of their theologians through the conquistadors and the Inquisition.

From *Deschooling Society* (World Perspectives, Vol. 44), by I. Illich, London: Calder and Boyers. Copyright 1971 by Ivan Illich. Reprinted with permission of Marion Boyars Publishers.

Two centuries ago the United States led the world in a movement to disestablish the monopoly of a single church. Now we need the constitutional disestablishment of the monopoly of the school, and thereby of a system which legally combines prejudice with discrimination. The first article of a bill of rights for a modern, humanist society would correspond to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: "The State shall make no law with respect to the establishment of education." There shall be no ritual obligatory for all.

To make this disestablishment effective, we need a law forbidding discrimination in hiring, voting, or

admission to centers of learning based on previous attendance at some curriculum. This guarantee would not exclude performance tests of competence for a function or role, but would remove the present absurd discrimination in favor of the person who learns a given skill with the largest expenditure of public funds or—what is equally likely—has been able to obtain a diploma which has no relation to any useful skill or job. Only by protecting the citizen from being disqualified by anything in his career in school can a constitutional disestablishment of school become psychologically effective.

Neither learning nor justice is promoted by schooling because educators insist on packaging instruction with certification. Learning and the assignment of social roles are melted into schooling. Yet to learn means to acquire a new skill or insight, while promotion depends on an opinion which others have formed. Learning frequently is the result of instruction, but selection for a role or category in the job market increasingly depends on mere length of attendance.

Instruction is the choice of circumstances which facilitate learning. Roles are assigned by setting a curriculum of conditions which the candidate must meet if he is to make the grade. School links instruction—but not learning—to these roles. This is neither reasonable nor liberating. It is not reasonable because it does not link relevant qualities or competences to roles, but rather the process by which such qualities are supposed to be acquired. It is not liberating or educational because school reserves instruction to those whose every step in learning fits previously approved measures of social control.

Curriculum has always been used to assign social rank. However, instead of equalizing chances, the school system has monopolized their distribution.

To detach competence from curriculum, inquiries into a man's learning history must be made taboo, like inquiries into his political affiliation, church attendance, lineage, sex habits, or racial background. Laws forbidding discrimination on the basis of prior schooling must be enacted. Laws, of course, cannot stop prejudice against the unschooled—nor are they meant to force anyone to intermarry with an autodidact [a self-taught individual]—but they can discourage unjustified discrimination.

A second major illusion on which the school system rests is that most learning is the result of teaching. Teaching, it is true, may contribute to certain kinds of learning under certain circumstances. But most people acquire most of their knowledge outside school, and in school only insofar as school, in a few rich countries, has become their place of confinement during an increasing part of their lives.

Most learning happens casually, and even most intentional learning is not the result of programmed instruction. Normal children learn their first language casually, although faster if their parents pay attention to them. Most people who learn a second language well do so as a result of odd circumstances and not of sequential teaching. They go to live with their grandparents, they travel, or they fall in love with a foreigner. Fluency in reading is also more often than not a result of such extracurricular activities. Most people who read widely, and with pleasure, merely believe that they learned to do so in school; when challenged, they easily discard this illusion.

But the fact that a great deal of learning even now seems to happen casually and as a by-product of some other

activity defined as work or leisure does not mean that planned learning does not benefit from planned instruction and that both do not stand in need of improvement. The strongly motivated student who is faced with the task of acquiring a new and complex skill may benefit greatly from the discipline now associated with the old-fashioned schoolmaster who taught reading, Hebrew, catechism, or multiplication by rote. School has now made this kind of drill teaching rare and disreputable, yet there are many skills which a motivated student with normal aptitude can master in a matter of a few months if taught in this traditional way. This is as true of codes as of their encipherment; of second and third languages as of reading and writing; and equally of special languages such as algebra, computer programming, chemical analysis, or of manual skills like typing, watchmaking, plumbing, writing, TV repair; or for that matter dancing, driving, and diving.

In certain cases acceptance into a learning program aimed at a specific skill might presuppose competence in some other skill, but it should certainly not be made to depend upon the process by which such prerequisite skills were acquired. TV repair presupposes literacy and some math; diving, good swimming; and driving, very little of either… .

At present schools pre-empt most educational funds. Drill instruction which costs less than comparable schooling is now a privilege of those rich enough to bypass the schools, and those whom either the army or big business sends through in-service training. In a program of progressive deschooling of U.S. education, at first the resources available for drill training would be limited. But ultimately there should be no obstacle for anyone at any time of his life to be able to choose instruction among hundreds of definable skills at public expense.

Right now educational credit good at any skill center could be provided in limited amounts for people of all ages, and not just to the poor. I envisage such credit in the form of an educational passport or an "edu-credit card" provided to each citizen at birth. In order to favor the poor, who probably would not use their yearly grants early in life, a provision could be made that interest accrued to later users of cumulated "entitlements." Such credits would permit most people to acquire the skills most in demand, at their convenience, better, faster, cheaper, and with fewer undesirable side effects than in school.

Potential skill teachers are never scarce for long because, on the one hand, demand for a skill grows only with its performance within a community and, on the other, a man exercising a skill could also teach it. But, at present, those using skills which are in demand and do require a human teacher are discouraged from sharing these skills with others. This is done either by teachers who monopolize the licenses or by unions which protect their trade interests. Skill centers which would be judged by customers on their results, and not on the personnel they employ or the process they use, would open unsuspected working opportunities, frequently even for those who are now considered unemployable. Indeed, there is no reason why such skill centers should not be at the work place itself, with the employer and his work force supplying instruction as well as jobs to those who choose to use their educational credits in this way.

In 1956 there arose a need to teach Spanish quickly to several hundred teachers, social workers, and ministers from the New York Archdiocese so that they could communicate with Puerto Ricans. My friend Gerry Morris announced over a Spanish radio station that he needed native speakers from Harlem. Next day some

two hundred teenagers lined up in front of his office, and he selected four dozen of them—many of them school dropouts. He trained them in the use of the U.S. Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Spanish manual, designed for use by linguists with graduate training, and within a week his teachers were on their own—each in charge of four New Yorkers who wanted to speak the language. Within six months the mission was accomplished. Cardinal Spellman could claim that he had 127 parishes in which at least three staff members could communicate in Spanish. No school program could have matched these results.

Skill teachers are made scarce by the belief in the value of licenses. Certification constitutes a form of market manipulation and is plausible only to a schooled mind. Most teachers of arts and trades are less skillful, less inventive, and less communicative than the best craftsmen and tradesmen. Most high-school teachers of Spanish or French do not speak the language as correctly as their pupils might after half a year of competent drills. Experiments conducted by Angel Quintero in Puerto Rico suggest that many young teenagers, if given the proper incentives, programs, and access to tools, are better than most schoolteachers at introducing their peers to the scientific exploration of plants, stars, and matter, and to the discovery of how and why a motor or a radio functions.

Opportunities for skill-learning can be vastly multiplied if we open the "market." This depends on matching the right teacher with the right student when he is highly motivated in an intelligent program, without the constraint of curriculum.

Free and competing drill instruction is a subversive blasphemy to the orthodox educator. It dissociates the acquisition of skills from "humane" education, which schools package together, and thus it promotes unlicensed learning no less than unlicensed teaching for unpredictable purposes.

There is currently a proposal on record which seems at first to make a great deal of sense. It has been prepared by Christopher Jencks of the Center for the Study of Public Policy and is sponsored by the Office of Economic opportunity. It proposes to put educational "entitlements" or tuition grants into the hands of parents and students for expenditure in the schools of their choice. Such individual entitlements could indeed be an important step in the right direction. We need a guarantee of the right of each citizen to an equal share of tax-derived educational resources, the right to verify this share, and the right to sue for it if denied. It is one form of a guarantee against regressive taxation.

The Jencks proposal, however, begins with the ominous statement that "conservatives, liberals, and radicals have all complained at one time or another that the American educational system gives professional educators too little incentive to provide high quality education to most children." The proposal condemns itself by proposing tuition grants which would have to be spent on schooling.

This is like giving a lame man a pair of crutches and stipulating that he use them only if the ends are tied together. As the proposal for tuition grants now stands, it plays into the hands not only of the professional educators but of racists, promoters of religious schools, and others whose interests are socially divisive. Above all, educational entitlements restricted to use within schools play into the hands of all those who want to continue to live in a society in which social advancement is tied not to proven knowledge but to the learning

pedigree by which it is supposedly acquired. This discrimination in favor of schools which dominates Jencks's discussion on refinancing education could discredit one of the most critically needed principles for educational reform: the return of initiative and accountability for learning to the learner or his most immediate tutor.

The deschooling of society implies a recognition of the two-faced nature of learning. An insistence on skill drill alone could be a disaster; equal emphasis must be placed on other kinds of learning. But if schools are the wrong places for learning a skill, they are even worse places for getting an education. School does both tasks badly, partly because it does not distinguish between them. School is inefficient in skill instruction especially because it is curricular. In most schools a program which is meant to improve one skill is chained always to another irrelevant task. History is tied to advancement in math, and class attendance to the right to use the playground.

Schools are even less efficient in the arrangement of the circumstances which encourage the open-ended, exploratory use of acquired skills, for which I will reserve the term "liberal education." The main reason for this is that school is obligatory and becomes schooling for schooling's sake: an enforced stay in the company of teachers, which pays off in the doubtful privilege of more such company. Just as skill instruction must be freed from curricular restraints, so must liberal education be dissociated from obligatory attendance. Both skill-learning and education for inventive and creative behavior can be aided by institutional arrangement, but they are of a different, frequently opposed nature.

Most skills can be acquired and improved by drills, because skill implies the mastery of definable and predictable behavior. Skill instruction can rely, therefore, on the simulation of circumstances in which the skill will be used. Education in the exploratory and creative use of skills, however, cannot rely on drills. Education can be the outcome of instruction, though instruction of a kind fundamentally opposed to drill. It relies on the relationship between partners who already have some of the keys which give access to memories stored in and by the community. It relies on the critical intent of all those who use memories creatively. It relies on the surprise of the unexpected question which opens new doors for the inquirer and his partner.

The skill instructor relies on the arrangement of set circumstances which permit the learner to develop standard responses. The educational guide or master is concerned with helping matching partners to meet so that learning can take place. He matches individuals starting from their own, unresolved questions. At the most he helps the pupil to formulate his puzzlement since only a clear statement will give him the power to find his match, moved like him, at the moment, to explore the same issue in the same context.

Matching partners for educational purposes initially seems more difficult to imagine than finding skill instructors and partners for a game. One reason is the deep fear which school has implanted in us, a fear which makes us censorious. The unlicensed exchange of skills—even undesirable skills—is more predictable and therefore seems less dangerous than the unlimited opportunity for meeting among people who share an issue which for them, at the moment, is socially, intellectually, and emotionally important.

The Brazilian teacher Paulo Freire knows this from experience. He discovered that any adult can begin to read in a matter of forty hours if the first words he deciphers are charged with political meaning. Freire trains his

teachers to move into a village and to discover the words which designate current important issues, such as the access to a well or the compound interest on the debts owed to the patron. In the evening the villagers meet for the discussion of these key words. They begin to realize that each word stays on the blackboard even after its sound has faded. The letters continue to unlock reality and to make it manageable as a problem. I have frequently witnessed how discussants grow in social awareness and how they are impelled to take political action as fast as they learn to read. They seem to take reality into their hands as they write it down.

I remember the man who complained about the weight of pencils: they were difficult to handle because they did not weigh as much as a shovel; and I remember another who on his way to work stopped with his companions and wrote the word they were discussing with his hoe on the ground: "agua." Since 1962 my friend Freire has moved from exile to exile, mainly because he refuses to conduct his sessions around words which are preselected by approved educators, rather than those which his discussants bring to the class.

The educational matchmaking among people who have been successfully schooled is a different task. Those who do not need such assistance are a minority, even among the readers of serious journals. The majority cannot and should not be rallied for discussion around a slogan, a word, or a picture. But the idea remains the same: they should be able to meet around a problem chosen and defined by their own initiative. Creative, exploratory learning requires peers currently puzzled about the same terms or problems. Large universities make the futile attempt to match them by multiplying their courses, and they generally fail since they are bound to curriculum, course structure, and bureaucratic administration. In schools, including universities, most resources are spent to purchase the time and motivation of a limited number of people to take up predetermined problems in a ritually defined setting. The most radical alternative to school would be a network or service which gave each man the same opportunity to share his current concern with others motivated by the same concern.

Let me give, as an example of what I mean, a description of how an intellectual match might work in New York City. Each man, at any given moment and at a minimum price, could identify himself to a computer with his address and telephone number, indicating the book, article, film, or recording on which he seeks a partner for discussion. Within days he could receive by mail the list of others who recently had taken the same initiative. This list would enable him by telephone to arrange for a meeting with persons who initially would be known exclusively by the fact that they requested a dialogue about the same subject.

Matching people according to their interest in a particular title is radically simple. It permits identification only on the basis of a mutual desire to discuss a statement recorded by a third person, and it leaves the initiative of arranging the meeting to the individual. Three objections are usually raised against this skeletal purity. I take them up not only to clarify the theory that I want to illustrate by my proposal—for they highlight the deep-seated resistance to deschooling education, to separating learning from social control—but also because they may help to suggest existing resources which are not now used for learning purposes.

The first objection is: Why cannot self-identification be based also on an idea or an issue? Certainly such subjective terms could also be used in a computer system. Political parties, churches, unions, clubs, neighborhood centers, and professional societies already organize their educational activities in this way and in

effect they act as schools. They all match people in order to explore certain "themes"; and these are dealt with in courses, seminars, and curricula in which presumed "common interests" are prepackaged. Such theme-matching is by definition teacher-centered: it requires an authoritarian presence to define for the participants the starting point for their discussion.

By contrast, matching by the title of a book, film, etc., in its pure form leaves it to the author to define the special language, the terms, and the framework within which a given problem or fact is stated; and it enables those who accept this starting point to identify themselves to one another. For instance, matching people around the idea of "cultural revolution" usually leads either to confusion or to demagoguery. On the other hand, matching those interested in helping each other understand a specific article by Mao, Marcuse, Freud, or Goodman stands in the great tradition of liberal learning from Plato's Dialogues, which are built around presumed statements by Socrates, to Aquinas's commentaries on Peter the Lombard. The idea of matching by title is thus radically different from the theory on which the "Great Books" clubs, for example, were built: instead of relying on the selection by some Chicago professors, any two partners can choose any book for further analysis.

The second objection asks: Why not let the identification of match seekers include information on age, background, world view, competence, experience, or other defining characteristics? Again, there is no reason why such discriminatory restrictions could not and should not be built into some of the many universities—with or without walls—which could use title-matching as their basic organizational device. I could conceive of a system designed to encourage meetings of interested persons at which the author of the book chosen would be present or represented; or a system which guaranteed the presence of a competent adviser; or one to which only students registered in a department or school had access; or one which permitted meetings only between people who defined their special approach to the title under discussion. Advantages for achieving specific goals of learning could be found for each of these restrictions. But I fear that, more often than not, the real reason for proposing such restrictions is contempt arising from the presumption that people are ignorant: educators want to avoid the ignorant meeting the ignorant around a text which they may not understand and which they read only because they are interested in it.

The third objection: Why not provide match seekers with incidental assistance that will facilitate their meetings—with space, schedules, screening, and protection? This is now done by schools with all the inefficiency characterizing large bureaucracies. If we left the initiative for meetings to the match seekers themselves, organizations which nobody now classifies as educational would probably do the job much better. I think of restaurant owners, publishers, telephone-answering services, department store managers, and even commuter train executives who could promote their services by rendering them attractive for educational meetings.

At a first meeting in a coffee shop, say, the partners might establish their identities by placing the book under discussion next to their cups. People who took the initiative to arrange for such meetings would soon learn what items to quote to meet the people they sought. The risk that the self-chosen discussion with one or several strangers might lead to a loss of time, disappointment, or even unpleasantness is certainly smaller than

the same risk taken by a college applicant. A computer-arranged meeting to discuss an article in a national magazine, held in a coffee shop off Fourth Avenue, would obligate none of the participants to stay in the company of his new acquaintances for longer than it took to drink a cup of coffee, nor would he have to meet any of them ever again. The chance that it would help to pierce the opaqueness of life in a modern city and further new friendship, self-chosen work, and critical reading is high. (The fact that a record of personal readings and meetings could be obtained thus by the FBI is undeniable; that this should still worry anybody in 1970 is only amusing to a free man, who willy-nilly contributes his share in order to drown snoopers in the irrelevancies they gather.)

Both the exchange of skills and matching of partners are based on the assumption that education for all means education by all. Not the draft into a specialized institution but only the mobilization of the whole population can lead to popular culture. The equal right of each man to exercise his competence to learn and to instruct is now pre-empted by certified teachers. The teachers' competence, in turn, is restricted to what may be done in school. And, further, work and leisure are alienated from each other as a result: the spectator and the worker alike are supposed to arrive at the workplace all ready to fit into a routine prepared for them. Adaptation in the form of a product's design, instruction, and publicity shapes them for their role as much as formal education by schooling. A radical alternative to a schooled society requires not only new formal mechanisms for the formal acquisition of skills and their educational use. A deschooled society implies a new approach to incidental or informal education.

Incidental education cannot any longer return to the forms which learning took in the village or the medieval town. Traditional society was more like a set of concentric circles of meaningful structures, while modern man must learn how to find meaning in many structures to which he is only marginally related. In the village, language and architecture and work and religion and family customs were consistent with one another, mutually explanatory and reinforcing. To grow into one implied a growth into the others. Even specialized apprenticeship was a by-product of specialized activities, such as shoemaking or the singing of psalms. If an apprentice never became a master or a scholar, he still contributed to making shoes or to making church services solemn. Education did not compete for time with either work or leisure. Almost all education was complex, lifelong, and unplanned.

Contemporary society is the result of conscious designs, and educational opportunities must be designed into them. Our reliance on specialized, full-time instruction through school will now decrease, and we must find more ways to learn and teach: the educational quality of all institutions must increase again. But this is a very ambiguous forecast. It could mean that men in the modern city will be increasingly the victims of an effective process of total instruction and manipulation once they are deprived of even the tenuous pretense of critical independence which liberal schools now provide for at least some of their pupils.

It could also mean that men will shield themselves less behind certificates acquired in school and thus gain in courage to "talk back" and thereby control and instruct the institutions in which they participate. To ensure the latter we must learn to estimate the social value of work and leisure by the educational give-and-take for which they offer opportunity. Effective participation in the politics of a street, a workplace, the library, a news

program, or a hospital is therefore the best measuring stick to evaluate their level as educational institutions.

I recently spoke to a group of junior-high school students in the process of organizing a resistance movement to their obligatory draft into the next class. Their slogan was "participation—not simulation." They were disappointed that this was understood as a demand for less rather than for more education, and reminded me of the resistance which Karl Marx put up against a passage in the Gotha program which—one hundred years ago—wanted to outlaw child labor. He opposed the proposal in the interest of the education of the young, which could happen only at work. If the greatest fruit of man's labor should be the education he receives from it and the opportunity which work gives him to initiate the education of others, then the alienation of modern society in a pedagogical sense is even worse than its economic alienation.

The major obstacle on the way to a society that truly educates was well defined by a black friend of mine in Chicago, who told me that our imagination was "all schooled up." We permit the state to ascertain the universal educational deficiencies of its citizens and establish one specialized agency to treat them. We thus share in the delusion that we can distinguish between what is necessary education for others and what is not, just as former generations established laws which defined what was sacred and what was profane.

Durkheim recognized that this ability to divide social reality into two realms was the very essence of formal religion. There are, he reasoned, religions without the supernatural and religions without gods, but none which does not subdivide the world into things and times and persons that are sacred and others that as a consequence are profane. Durkheim's insight can be applied to the sociology of education, for school is radically divisive in a similar way.

The very existence of obligatory schools divides any society into two realms: some time spans and processes and treatments and professions are "academic" or "pedagogic," and others are not. The power of school thus to divide social reality has no boundaries: education becomes unworldly and the world becomes non-educational.

READING 49

How Schools Really Matter

Douglas B. Downey and Benjamin G. Gibbs

While Ivan Illich offers a fundamental critique of the system of education, Douglas B. Downey and Benjamin G. Gibbs provide a defense. Without the educational system, these authors argue, there would be much more profound inequalities in society. Here, Downey and Gibbs shift the debate over school reform from one that tends to blame schools and/or teachers for the low academic achievement of some students to an acknowledgment of the unequal contexts in which school-aged children are raised. Their emphasis is not on what happens in schools themselves but rather on what happens within the broader context in which schooling occurs—namely, homes and neighborhoods. They argue that this broader context needs to be taken into account when we assess the success or failure of schools and when we consider the types of reform that are needed to achieve true educational equity.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. What arguments do Downey and Gibbs make to support their point that schools are more the solution to inequality than the problem?
2. Which specific features of social context do the authors think we need to attend to when evaluating the effectiveness of our schools?
3. What reforms to schools do the authors propose in this piece?

There's an old joke about a man on a street corner, down on his hands and knees searching for his lost wallet. A passerby stops to help, asking, "So you lost it right around here?" "Oh no," the man replies, "I lost the wallet several blocks ago. I'm just looking on this street corner because this is where the lighting is good."

From "How Schools Really Matter," by D. B. Downey and B. G. Gibbs, *Contexts*, 9(2), pp. 50–54. Copyright © 2010 by the American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

It's tempting to look for the source of a problem in places where the lighting is good even if we're not in the right place. When we hear about high dropout rates; persistent black/white gaps in test scores; low American reading, math, and science scores; dramatic differences in resources among schools; and even growing childhood obesity, it's sort of easy to ascribe these negative outcomes to schools. In fact, this is the "traditional" story we hear about American schools.

The Traditional Tale of Schools

The tendency to view schools as the source of so many problems is especially true when we consider equality of opportunity, an important American value. There are many good reasons to believe that schools are the primary engines of inequality. First, children attending schools with lots of high-income children tend to perform better on standardized tests than kids at schools with lots of low-income children. Second, there are clear resource differences between these schools, rooted in the fact that, in most states, local tax revenues constitute a significant portion of the school's budget. For example, Ohio's local taxes constitute about half of a school's budget (state taxes constitute 43% and federal taxes about 7%). As a result of the heavy emphasis on local taxes, some schools are able to spend substantially more money per student than others. This means schools located in areas with expensive houses and successful businesses can spend more on new textbooks, teacher pay, recreational facilities, extracurricular activities, and help for students with special needs. Third, in high-resource schools, teachers encounter fewer children with behavioral problems and more parents engaged in their children's education, factors that can attract and retain better teachers. Based on these patterns, it seems obvious that if we want to improve the quality of life for the disadvantaged in the United States the best place to start is schools.

But this traditional story has developed largely without understanding the way in which children's academic outcomes are shaped by many factors outside of schools. Simply look at the amount of time children spend outside of school. If we focus on the 9-month academic year only, the proportion of time children spend in school is about *one-third*. And if we include the non-school summer, children spend just one-quarter of their waking hours in school each year. Now if we also include the years before kindergarten—which certainly affect children—we find that the typical 18-year-old American has spent just 13% of his or her waking hours in school. For most of us, it's surprising to learn that such a large percentage of children's time is spent outside of school, but it's important to keep in mind if we're serious about understanding how schools really matter.

A contextual perspective reminds us to look at the rest of kids' lives. For instance, not every student comes to school with the same economic, social, or cultural resources. Even with the same educational opportunities, some students benefit from home environments that prepare them for school work and so they are better able to take advantage of education.

Moving away from the traditional, narrow view of schools that forgets the importance of children's time outside the classroom, we endorse adopting a contextualized (or impact) view of schools. This new emphasis can really change how we think about what schools can—and can't—do for our kids.

Pianos and Parents

Imagine that we want to compare the effectiveness of two piano instructors who will both teach 10-week piano classes for beginners. We flip a coin and assign one instructor to place A and the other to place B. Our goal is complicated, however, by the fact that in place B, due to cost, almost no students come from a home with a piano, whereas in place A, whose parents have more disposable income, most students have a piano at home. As a result, place A's students have already had some practice time on a piano, whereas place B's students have had little to none. In addition, while both instructors teach a session once a week, place A's students practice on their own several times a week, whereas in place B—where few have pianos at home—students have a much harder time finding a way to practice.

Obviously, if we just compared the piano students' skills at the end of the 10-week program we couldn't accurately assess the quality of the two instructors—the two groups' skills differed before the lessons began. And if we compared how much the students' skills improved during the instructional period, it would still be hard to know which instructor was more effective because place A's students practiced more often than place B's students did. Given that these two instructors face different challenges, is there a way to evaluate them fairly? Can we isolate how the piano teachers really mattered?

This is the quandary we have when trying to understand how schools (or teachers) matter for children's lives; the same kinds of complicating factors are at work. First, children begin schooling with very different levels of academic skills. For example, the black/white gap in math and reading skills is roughly a standard deviation at the end of high school, but half of this gap is evident at the beginning of kindergarten, before schools have had a chance to matter. And the differences in eight skills between high- and low-socioeconomic status (SES) students at the start of kindergarten are even larger. Obviously, these variations aren't a consequence of differences in school quality, but of the different kinds of students schools serve.

Thinking contextually, some home environments complement what occurs at school as parents help with homework, communicate with teachers, reinforce school concepts, provide a safe and stable environment for study, and attend to children's medical needs (by, for instance, providing consistent visits to doctors and dentists). In her book *Home Advantage*, sociologist Annette Lareau gives a poignant description of just how important parents can be, getting involved in their child's coursework and with their teachers in ways that promote academic success and instilling in their children a kind of academic entitlement. She wrote that these parents "made an effort to integrate educational goals into family life including teaching children new words when driving by billboards, having children practice penmanship and vocabulary by writing out shopping lists, practicing mathematics during baking projects, and practicing vocabulary during breakfast time." Interacting with instructors, the upper-middle class parents Lareau observed requested specific classroom teachers or asked that their child be placed in school programs for the gifted, for speech therapy, or with the learning resource center. In contrast, low-SES parents tended to have less time for involvement with their children's schoolwork, leaving educational experiences in the hands of the "experts." Much like having a piano at home, these contexts of advantage and disadvantage play a critical role in shaping how children gain academic skills during their school years.

Bringing in Context

By using a contextual perspective, sociologists have contributed considerably to our understanding of how schools matter. One of the most influential studies was the 1966 Coleman Report, a massive analysis of American schools that was commissioned by the Federal Department of Education. James Coleman, the lead author of the report, directed the collection of data from 4,000 schools and more than 645,000 American school children in the early 1960s. The researchers were interested in why some children had high math and reading skills and others did not. They measured many characteristics of schools (including school curriculum, facilities, teacher qualities, and student body characteristics) and many characteristics of children's home lives (like parents' SES—education, income, and occupation level) to see which were more closely related to academic skills. Surprisingly, school characteristics were only weakly related to academic skills. It turned out that differences between schools in terms of quality played only a small role in understanding the variation in students' academic skills while home life (parents' SES showed the strongest relationship) mattered much more. Skeptics of this conclusion, such as sociologist Christopher Jencks, re-evaluated Coleman's conclusion with new data, but ended up finding similar patterns.

Of course, one limitation of this approach is that it depends heavily on whether Coleman and Jencks were measuring the right things about schools. Maybe they were missing what really mattered. While they were measuring per pupil expenditures, teacher/student ratios, and racial composition, they missed critical factors like teacher quality. If they failed to measure a lot of important things about schools, then their conclusions that schools play only a minor role in explaining inequality of skills might be wrong.

Seasonal Comparison Research

What researchers need is a way to untangle the role of school and non-school influences. Observing student learning during the school year tells us little about how schools matter because students are exposed to both school and non-school environments. When we compare annually collected test scores, for example, it becomes very difficult to know why some students fall behind and some get ahead. Sociologist Barbara Heyns pointed out that during the summer children are influenced by non-school factors only. The best way to understand how schools matter, she reasoned, was to observe how things change between the non-school period (summer) and the school period. This strategy works like a natural experiment, separating the "treatment" from the treated. Knowing what happens to group-level differences in achievement by race, class, or gender when school is in session (the treatment) compared to when it is not (the control) is a good way to know if schools make educational gaps bigger or smaller.

This important insight led Heyns to collect a different kind of data. She evaluated fifth, sixth, and seventh grade students at the beginning and end of the academic years in Atlanta. By testing them both in the fall and spring, she was able to tell how much they learned during the summer, when school was out. This study design allowed her to uncover a provocative pattern—high- and low-SES students gained academic skills at about the same rate during the nine-month academic year. Gaps in skills developed during the summers. Although schools did not close achievement gaps between groups, these results bolstered Coleman and Jencks's initial conclusions that schools were not the primary reason for group-level inequalities. Heyns's provocative findings were replicated by sociologists Doris Entwisle and Karl Alexander in Baltimore and, more recently, by myself [Douglas Downey] with colleagues at Ohio State. With nationally representative data, we found that low- and high-SES children learned math and reading at similar rates during the 9-month kindergarten and first grade periods, but that gaps in skills grew quickly during the summer in between, when school was out.

Taken together, the overall pattern from this seasonal research supports Coleman's conclusion: schools are not the source of inequality. The seasonal approach to understanding schools gives us a much more accurate understanding of how schools influence inequality. This research consistently produces an unconventional conclusion—if we lived in a world with no schools at all, inequality would be much worse. In other words, when it comes to inequality, schools are more part of the solution than the problem.

This contextual way of thinking about schools and inequality is difficult to reconcile, however, with the "traditional" story—that wide variations in school quality are the engine of inequality. By adopting a more contextual perspective on schools, we can understand this counterintuitive claim: despite the fact that some schools have more resources than others, schools end up being an equalizing force. The key is that the inequalities that exist outside of school are considerably larger than the ones students experience in school.

Schools, Context, and Policy

At the beginning of this article, we pointed out that it's natural to look to schools for the source of many of our kids' problems—they're the corner with the best "lighting." The often-unexplored terrain *outside* of schools, though, remains shadowy and seemingly inaccessible. This doesn't need to be the case. And, though extending the light beyond schools reveals that group-level inequality would be much worse if not for schools, it doesn't mean that schools are off the hook. In fact, using school impact as a guide, many "successful" schools in the traditional view are revealed as low-impact—good students don't always signal good instructors. In these schools, children pass proficiency exams, but since they started off in a better position, it's arguable that the schools didn't actually serve their students.

Clearly, when we employ a contextual perspective, we think about school policy, child development, and social problems in a new light. A contextual approach to schools promotes sensible policy, efficiently targeted resources, and reasonable assessment tools that recognize that some schools and teachers face very different challenges than others.

For example, a tremendous amount of energy and money is directed toward developing accountability systems for schools. But recall the analogy of the two piano instructors. It's difficult to determine which instructor is best, given that place A has students that start with more skills and practice more outside of instruction. Now suppose that we knew one more piece of information: how fast each group of piano players gained skills when not taking lessons. Suddenly, we could compare the rate of improvement outside of instruction with the rate observed during the instructional period. We could see how much instruction mattered.

This "impact" view has recently been applied to schools. In 2008, with fellow sociologists Paul T. von Hippel and Melanie Hughes, I [Douglas Downey] constructed impact measures by taking a school's average difference between its students' first-grade learning rate and the learning rate observed in the summer prior to first grade. The key finding was that not all the schools deemed as "failing" under traditional criteria were really failing. Indeed, three out of four schools had been incorrectly evaluated. That's not to say that there were no variations in school quality, but many schools did much better than expected when we took a contextual approach to measurement. And some did much worse. If impact evaluations are more accurate, then teachers serving disadvantaged children are doing a better job than previously thought and current methods of school evaluation are producing substantial errors.

With its contextual orientation, seasonal research has also provided insights into other ways that schools matter. For example, researchers have considered whether "summer setback" can be avoided by modifying the school year so that there is no long gap in school exposure. Von Hippel has compared math and reading learning in schools with year-long calendars versus those with traditional school-year/summer break calendars. In both conditions, children attended school for about 180 days a year, but the timing of those days was spread more evenly in year-round schools. It turned out that, once a calendar year was up, both groups had learned about the same. The policy lesson is that increasing school exposure is probably more important than fiddling with how school days are distributed across the year.

Given that school exposure appears critical, many have viewed summer school (restricted to academically struggling children) as an attractive option for reducing inequality. It turns out, though, that children attending summer school gain fewer academic skills than we would expect. This may be because the academic programs in the summer are of lower quality, but it may also be because the kinds of students who typically attend summer school are also the kind who would typically suffer a "summer setback" without it. Viewed in this light, just treading water or maintaining the same academic skills during the summer could be viewed as a positive outcome.

And in other research employing seasonal comparisons, researchers have shown that children gain body mass index (BMI) three times faster during the summer than during the school year. Obviously, schools shouldn't abandon attempts to improve the quality of lunches or the schooling environment, but research suggests that attention should be paid to non-school factors as the primary sources of childhood obesity.

In the end, looking at schools through a contextual lens provides exciting insights. When we forget how other aspects of children's lives figure into their development, we create a distorted view of schools. The contextual perspective corrects this error and produces a more accurate understanding of how schools really matter. It suggests that if we are serious about improving American children's school performance, we will need to take a broader view of education policy. In addition to school reform, we must also aim to improve children's lives where they spend the vast majority of their time—with their families and in their neighborhoods.

Recommended Resources

[Editors' Note: No references were provided for this article; however, the authors recommend the following for further research into the subject.]

Coleman, James S. "Equality of Educational Opportunity," United States Office of Education and National Center for Education Statistics (1966). The classic large-scale study of American schools and factors related to test score performance.

Downey, Douglas B., Paul T. von Hippel, and Melanie Hughes. "Are 'Failing' Schools Really Failing? Using Seasonal Comparisons to Evaluate School Effectiveness." Sociology of Education (2008), 81(3):242–270. Introduces impact evaluation, which isolates school from non-school factors in child achievement via seasonal comparisons.

Entwisle, Doris R., Karl L. Alexander, and Linda S. Olson. Children, Schools & Inequality (Westview Press, 1997). Uses data from Baltimore to show how social context shapes children's early schooling experiences.

Heyns, Barbara. Summer Learning and the Effects of Schooling (Academic Press, 1978). Describes the seminal use of "seasonal comparisons" to report the results of summer versus school-time learning.

Lareau, Annette. Home Advantage: Social Class and Parental Intervention in Elementary Education (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000). A vivid ethnographic account of the different ways working and middle-class families prepare their children for school and interact with teachers.

READING 50

Can Schooling Contribute to a More Just Society?

Michael W. Apple

In this excerpt from a larger piece, Michael W. Apple, a well-known critical theorist, examines the attempts to build more equal schools from a political perspective. This excerpt, drawing on critical theory, examines both the politics of educational reform and the motivations driving conservative social movements in education. Apple looks at what makes these movements successful and suggests that liberal politicians and school reformers should consider such strategies in their attempts to change the educational process. This piece moves the issue of equality and equity in education to a new level, far outside the schools, to that of the politics of education.

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. To what extent are politics important in deciding what happens in classrooms? How so?
2. Why, according to Apple, has the conservative Right been successful in mobilizing people, even when participation appears to be against their better interests?
3. What strategy for educational reforms is Apple suggesting as an alternative to the political agenda put forth by conservative groups?

[W]hen a nation and its government and major institutions do not deliver on their promises and on the sets of values they officially profess in education and elsewhere, then substantive criticism is the ultimate act of patriotism. Such criticism says that "We are not just passing through. This is our country and our institutions as well, built by the labor of millions of people such as ourselves. We take the values in our founding documents seriously and demand that you do so too."

From "Can Schooling Contribute to a More Just Society?" by M. W. Apple, *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 3(3), pp. 239–261. Copyright 2008 by SAGE Publications.

Of course, the arguments [I am] making in this article are quite political. But that is the point. Over the past three decades, many committed and critical educators have argued that education must be seen as a political act. They have suggested that in order to do this, we need to think *relationally*. That is, understanding education requires that we situate it back into both the unequal relations of power in the larger society and into the relations of dominance and subordination—and the conflicts to change these things—that are generated by these relations. Thus, rather than simply asking whether students have mastered a particular subject matter and have done well on our all too common tests, we should ask a different set of questions: Whose knowledge is this? How did it become "official"? What is the relationship between this knowledge and who has cultural, social, and economic capital in this society? Who benefits from these definitions of legitimate knowledge and who does not? What can we do as critical educators and activists to change existing

educational and social inequalities and to create curricula and teaching that are more socially just (Apple, 1996, 2000; Apple & Beane, 2007)?

These are complicated questions and they often require complicated answers. However, there is now a long tradition of asking and answering these kinds of critical challenges to the ways education is currently being carried on, a tradition that has grown considerably since the time when I first raised these issues in *Ideology and Curriculum* (Apple, 1979; see also the more recent 3rd ed., Apple, 2004). Perhaps the best way of documenting why we need to keep these political issues at the forefront of our vision of what schools now do and what they should do is to focus on the life of a student, someone I knew very well. I hope that you will forgive me if at times throughout this article I use personal narratives to make larger points. But it seems to me that sometimes such a writing style can bring home points in ways that more abstract ways of presenting things cannot. Such a style also makes the politics of education not something "out there" in some abstract universe very far away, but puts it "right here" in terms of our personal choices inside and outside of education.

Remembering Real Schools and Real Children

Joseph sobbed at my desk. He was a tough kid, a hard case, someone who often made life difficult for his teachers. He was all of nine years old and here he was sobbing, holding on to me in public. He had been in my fourth-grade class all year, a classroom situated in a decaying building in an east coast city that was among the most impoverished in the nation. There were times when I wondered, seriously, whether I would make it through that year. There were many Josephs in that classroom and I was constantly drained by the demands, the bureaucratic rules, the daily lessons that bounced off of the kids' armor. Yet somehow it was satisfying, compelling, and important, even though the prescribed curriculum and the textbooks that were meant to teach it were often beside the point. They were boring to the kids and boring to me.

I should have realized the first day what it would be like when I opened that city's "Getting Started" suggested lessons for the first few days and it began with the suggestion that "as a new teacher" I should circle the students' desks and have them introduce each other and tell something about themselves. It's not that I was against this activity; it's just that I didn't have enough unbroken desks (or even chairs) for all of the students. A number of the kids had nowhere to sit. This was my first lesson—but certainly not my last—in understanding that the curriculum and those who planned it lived in an unreal world, a world *fundamentally* disconnected from my life with those children in that inner city classroom.

But here's Joseph. He's still crying. I've worked extremely hard with him all year long. We've eaten lunch together; we've read stories; we've gotten to know each other. There are times when he drives me to despair and other times when I find him to be among the most sensitive children in my class. I just can't give up on this kid. He's just received his report card and it says that he is to repeat fourth grade. The school system has a policy that states that failure in any two subjects (including the "behavior" side of the report card) requires that the student be left back. Joseph was failing "gym" and arithmetic. Even though he had shown improvement, he had trouble keeping awake during arithmetic, had done poorly on the mandatory city-wide tests, and hated gym. One of his parents worked a late shift and Joseph would often stay up, hoping to spend some time with her. And the things that students were asked to do in gym were, to him, "lame."

The thing is, he had made real progress during the year. But I was instructed to keep him back. I knew that things would be worse next year. There would still not be enough desks. The poverty in that community would still be horrible; and health care and sufficient funding for job training and other services would be diminished. I knew that the jobs that were available in this former mill town paid deplorable wages and that even with both of his parents working for pay, Joseph's family income was simply insufficient. I also knew that, given all that I already had to do each day in that classroom and each night at home in preparation for the next day, it would be nearly impossible for me to work any harder than I had already done with Joseph. And there were another five children in that class whom I was supposed to leave back.

So Joseph sobbed. Both he and I understood what this meant. There would be no additional help for me—or for children such as Joseph—next year. The promises would remain simply rhetorical. Words would be thrown at the problems. Teachers and parents and children would be blamed. But the school system would

look like it believed in and enforced higher standards. The structuring of economic and political power in that community and that state would again go on as "business as usual."

The next year Joseph basically stopped trying. The last time I heard anything about him was that he was in prison.

This story is not apocryphal. While the incident took place a while ago, the conditions in that community and that school are much worse today. And the intense pressure that teachers, administrators, and local communities are under is also considerably worse (Kozol, 1991; Lipman, 2004). It reminds me of why large numbers of thoughtful educators and activists mistrust the incessant focus on standards, increased testing, marketization and vouchers, and other kinds of educational "reforms" which may sound good in the abstract, but which often work in exactly the opposite ways when they reach the level of the classroom (see Apple, 2006; Lipman, 2004; McNeil, 2000; Valenzuela, 2005). It is exactly this sensibility of the contradictions between proposals for reform and the realities and complexities of education on the ground that provides one of the major reasons so many of us are asking the questions surrounding how education can make a more serious contribution to social justice. I want to say more about this in the next section of this article.

The Politics of Educational Reform

Critical educators have long demonstrated that policies often have strikingly unforeseen consequences. Reforms that are instituted with good intentions may have hidden effects that are more than a little problematic. We have shown for instance that the effects of some of the favorite reforms of neo-liberals and neo-conservatives—voucher plans, national or state-wide curricula, and national or state-wide testing can serve as examples—quite often reproduce or even worsen inequalities. Thus, we should be very cautious about accepting what may seem to be meritorious intentions at face value. Intentions are too often contradicted by how reforms may function in practice. This is true not only for large-scale transformations of educational policies and governance, but also about moves to change the ways curriculum and teaching go on in schools.

The framework politically and educationally progressive educators have employed to understand this is grounded in what in cultural theory is called the act of repositioning. It in essence says that the best way to understand what any set of institutions, policies, and practices does is to see it from the standpoint of those who have the least power. Speaking personally, growing up poor myself made this almost a "natural" perspective for me to take. That is, every institution, policy, and practice—and especially those that now dominate education and the larger society—establish relations of power in which some voices are heard and some are not. While it is not preordained that those voices that will be heard most clearly are also those who have the most economic, cultural, and social capital, it is most likely that this will be the case. After all, we do not exist on a level playing field. Many economic, social, and educational policies when actually put in place tend to benefit those who already have advantages.

These points may seem overly rhetorical and too abstract, but unfortunately there is no small amount of truth in them. For example, in a time when all too much of the discourse around educational reform is focused on vouchers and choice plans on the one hand and on proposals for national or state curricula, standards, and testing on the other, as I have shown in a number of volumes (Apple, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2006, 2009; Apple et al., 2003), there is a good deal of international evidence now that such policies may actually reproduce or even worsen class, gender and race inequalities. Thus, existing structures of economic and cultural power often lead to a situation in which what may have started out in some educators' or legislators' minds as an attempt to make things better, in the end is all too usually transformed into another set of mechanisms for social stratification.

While much of this is due to the ways in which race, gender, class, and "ability" act as structural realities in this society and to how we fund (and do not fund) schools, some of it is related to the hesitancy of policy makers to take seriously enough the complicated ways in which education is itself a political act. These very politics and the structurally generated inequalities that stand behind them provide much of the substance underpinning the organizational principles of my work.

A key word in my discussion above is *reform*. This concept is what might be called a "sliding signifier." That is, it has no essential meaning and, like a glass, can be filled with multiple things. As Wittgenstein (1953) reminded us, it is always wise not to accept the meaning of a concept at face value. Instead, one must

contextualize it. The meaning is in its *use*. Let us look at this in a bit more detail.

The language of educational reform is always interesting. It consistently paints a picture that what is going [on] in schools now needs fixing, is outmoded, inefficient, or simply "bad." Reforms will fix it. They will make things "better." Over the past decades certain language systems in particular have been mobilized. Not only will specific reforms make things better, [but] they will make schools more democratic. Of course, the word democracy is one of the best examples of a sliding signifier. It carries with it an entire history of conflicts over its very meaning (Foner, 1998). Like reform, democracy does not carry an essential meaning emblazoned on its head so to speak. Instead it is one of the most contested words in the English language. Indeed, one of the major tactics of dominant groups historically and currently is to cement particular meanings of democracy into public discourse. Thus, under current neo-liberal policies in education and elsewhere, there are consistent attempts to redefine democracy as simply consumer choice. Here democracy is not a collective project of building and rebuilding our public institutions. It becomes simply a matter of placing everything that was once public onto a market. Collective justice will somehow take care of itself as the market works its wonders.

As Mary Lee Smith and her colleagues have recently demonstrated in their powerful analysis of a number of educational reforms, the nice-sounding and "democratic" language used to promote reforms is often totally at odds with the actual functioning of these reforms in real schools in real communities (Smith, 2004). A significant number of things that were advertised (and that is often the appropriate word) as making schools more responsive and "better" (increased testing and parental choice through marketization may serve as examples) may have exacerbated problems of inequality. (Think of Joseph and what happened to him in an earlier round of increased testing and "raising standards.")

One of the reasons this is the case is because the formation of a good deal of educational policy is actually a form of "symbolic politics," basically a kind of theater (Smith, 2004). This is not to claim that policy makers are acting in bad faith. Rather, because of the distribution (or not) of resources, tragic levels of impoverishment, the ways policies are implemented (or not), and the cleverness of economically and cultural[ly] dominant groups in using reforms for their own advantage, the patterns of benefits are not anywhere near the supposedly democratic ends envisioned by some of their well-meaning proponents. (Some reforms as well may simply be the result of cynical manipulation of the public for electoral advantage; but that's a topic for another essay.)

Understanding Conservative Social Movements in Education

The arguments I made above are related to a particular claim that is important to make. Many of us have spent a good deal of time showing that it is social movements, *not* educators, who are the real engines of educational transformations (Anyon, 2005; Apple, 2000, 2006, 2009). And the social movements that are the most powerful now are more than a little conservative. I want to argue in fact that unless we think very tactically about what the Right has been able to accomplish and what the balance of forces now are, all too much of our attempts at putting in place more critically democratic reforms may be less powerful than we would like.

Over the past decade, a good deal of concerted effort has been devoted to analyzing the reasons behind the rightist resurgence—what I have called "conservative modernization"—in education and to try to find spaces for interrupting it (see Apple, 2006; Apple & Buras, 2006). My own aim has not simply been to castigate the Right, although there is a bit of fun in doing so. Rather, I have also sought to illuminate the dangers, and the elements of good sense, not only bad sense, that are found within what is an identifiable and powerful new "hegemonic bloc" (that is, a powerful set of groups that provides overall leadership to and pressure on what the basic goals and policies of a society are). This new rightist alliance is made up of various factions—neo-liberals, neo-conservatives, authoritarian populist religious conservatives, and some members of the professional and managerial new middle class. These are complicated groups, but let me describe them briefly.

This power bloc combines multiple fractions of capital who are committed to neo-liberal marketized solutions to educational problems, neo-conservative intellectuals who want a "return" to higher standards and a "common culture," authoritarian populist religious fundamentalists who are deeply worried about secularity and the preservation of their own traditions, and particular fractions of the professionally oriented new middle class who are committed to the ideology and techniques of accountability, measurement and "management." While there are clear tensions and conflicts within this alliance, in general its overall aims are in providing the educational conditions believed necessary both for increasing international competitiveness, profit and discipline and for returning us to a romanticized past of the "ideal" home, family and school (Apple, 1996, 2006).

I have had a number of reasons for focusing on the alliance behind conservative modernization. First, these groups are indeed powerful, as any honest analysis of what is happening in education and the larger society clearly indicates. Second, they are quite talented in connecting to people who might ordinarily disagree with them. For this reason, I have shown in a number of places that people who find certain elements of conservative modernization relevant to their lives are not puppets. They are not dupes who have little understanding of the "real" relations of this society. This smacks of earlier reductive analyses within the critical tradition that were based in ideas of "false consciousness."

My position is very different. I maintain that the reason that some of the arguments coming from the various factions of this new hegemonic bloc are listened to is because they *are* connected to aspects of the realities that people experience (Apple, 1996; Apple & Pedroni, 2005). The tense alliance of neo-liberals, neo-

conservatives, authoritarian populist religious activists, and the professional and managerial new middle class only works because there has been a very creative articulation of themes that resonate deeply with the experiences, fears, hopes, and dreams of people as they go about their daily lives. The Right has often been more than a little manipulative in its articulation of these themes. It has integrated them within racist nativist discourses, within economically dominant forms of understanding, and within a problematic sense of "tradition." But, this integration could only occur if they were organized around people's understanding of their real material and cultural lives.

The second reason I have stressed the tension between good and bad sense and the ability of dominant groups to connect to people's real understandings of their lives—aside from my profound respect for Antonio Gramsci's (1968, 1971) writings about this—has to do with my belief that we have witnessed a major educational accomplishment over the past three decades in many countries. All too often, we assume that educational and cultural struggles are epiphenomenal. The real battles occur in the paid workplace—the "economy." Not only is this a strikingly reductive sense of what the economy is (its focus on paid, not unpaid, work; its neglect of the fact that, say, cultural institutions such as schools are also places where paid work goes on, etc.) (Apple, 1986), it also ignores what the Right has actually done.

Conservative modernization has radically reshaped the commonsense of society. It has worked in every sphere —the economic, the political, and the cultural—to alter the basic categories we use to evaluate our institutions and our public and private lives. It has established new identities. It has recognized that to win in the state, you must win in civil society. That is, you need to work at the level of people's daily experiences, not only in government policies. The accomplishment of such a vast educational project has many implications. It shows how important cultural struggles are. And, oddly enough, it gives reason for hope. It forces us to ask a number of significant questions. What can we learn from the Right about how to build movements for social transformation? If the Right can do this, why can't we?

I do not mean these as rhetorical questions. As I have argued repeatedly in my own work, the Right has shown how powerful the struggle over meaning and identity—and hence, schools, curricula, teaching, and evaluation—can be. While we should not want to emulate their often cynical and manipulative processes, the fact that they have had such success in pulling people under their ideological umbrella has much to teach us. Granted there are real differences in money and power between the forces of conservative modernization and those whose lives are being tragically altered by the policies and practices coming from the alliance. But, the Right was not as powerful 30 years ago as it is now. It collectively organized. It created a decentered unity, one where each element sacrificed some of its particular agenda to push forward on those areas that bound them together. Can we not do the same?

I believe that we can, but only if we face up to the realities and dynamics of power in unromantic ways—and think tactically about what can be done now even under conditions that we may not always control. And this means not only critically analyzing the rightist agendas and the effects of their increasingly mistaken and arrogant policies, but engaging in some serious criticism of some elements within the progressive and critical educational communities as well. Thus, as I argue in *Educating the "Right" Way* (Apple, 2006), the romantic,

possibilitarian rhetoric of some of the writers on critical pedagogy is not sufficiently based on a tactical or strategic analysis of the current situation nor is it sufficiently grounded in its understanding of the reconstructions of discourse and movements that are occurring in all too many places. Here I follow Cameron McCarthy (2000), who wisely reminds us, "We must think possibility within constraint; that is the condition of our time."

We need to remember that cultural and educational struggles are not epiphenomenal. They *count*, and they count in institutions throughout society. In order for dominant groups to exercise leadership, large numbers of people must be convinced that the maps of reality circulated by those with the most economic, political, and cultural power are indeed wiser than other alternatives. Dominant groups do this by attaching these maps to the elements of good sense that people have and by changing the very meaning of the key concepts and their accompanying structures of feeling that provide the centers of gravity for our hopes, fears, and dreams about this society. The Right has been much more successful in doing this than progressive groups and movements, in part because it has been able to craft—through hard and lengthy economic, political, and cultural efforts—a tense but still successful alliance that has shifted the major debates over education and economic and social policy onto its own terrain. And the sometimes mostly rhetorical material of critical pedagogy simply is unable to cope with this. Only when it is linked much more to concrete issues of educational policy and practice—and to the daily lives of educators, students, and community members—can it succeed. This, of course, is why journals such as *Rethinking Schools* and books such as *Democratic Schools* (Apple & Beane, 2007) that connect critical educational theories and approaches to the actual ways in which they can be and are present in real classrooms become so important. Thus, while we should support the principles of critical theory and critical pedagogy in the USA and elsewhere, we also need to act as internal critics when it has forgotten what it is meant to do and has sometimes become simply an academic specialization at universities.

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READING 51

The Paradox of Success at a No-Excuses School

Joanne W. Golann

How can well-intentioned efforts at school reform go awry? In this article, Joanne W. Golann explores what sociologists might call the unintended consequences of school reform, focusing her attention on no-excuses charter schools. No-excuses charter schools are those that use highly disciplined behavioral methods and rigorous instruction to improve the educational outcomes of their students; they often draw students who are less advantaged in terms of race and social class. Based on 18 months of ethnographic research at one school, Golann argues that such schools may actually undermine their students' success by developing learners who hold back their opinions and defer to authority. Instead of self-motivated, lifelong learners, Golann worries that such schools may actually produce passive "worker-learners."

Questions to consider for this reading:

1. Here, the author characterizes the process of creating worker-learners as an "unintended consequence." Is it possible that the development of passive learners *isn't* entirely unintended? Which theoretical perspective might back this up?
2. Which aspects of curriculum and instruction at this no-excuses school do you see as contributing most to the creation of worker-learners?
3. How can the methods of curriculum and instruction be altered at a no-excuses school to promote more active and self-motivated learners—ones who have the potential for true social mobility?

From "The Paradox of Success at a No-Excuses School," by J. W. Golann. *Sociology of Education*, 88(2), 2015, pp. 103–119. Copyright 2015 by the American Sociological Association. Reprinted with permission.

One rainy January afternoon, I sat with Alexis, a bright, outspoken eighth grader at the urban charter school where I was conducting fieldwork. She was at school with a few dozen other students who had accumulated too many behavioral infractions to participate in that day's snow tubing trip. A student at Dream Academy since the fifth grade, she reflected on her experiences:

> I didn't like it 'cause I was so young when I came here and it was strict. It still is strict and I didn't like that. They were just so picky. Like they were asking me so much … 'cause they want to get us to college but that's not how they be acting in college. In college they are—they're not strict. In college, you can do whatever you want so this is a college preparatory school so we should be able to do whatever we want but we're not. So, technically it's not a college preparatory school because you're not prepping us for college—you're disciplining us, like you don't have detention in college. You don't have to wear a uniform in college. You don't have to walk in straight lines in college.

Alexis echoed her classmates' complaints about the school's constant surveillance of their behaviors, but she

also recognized that the school was trying to help her achieve upward mobility… .

In this article, I explore how a new model of no-excuses urban charter schools is preparing its students for college; specifically, I focus on the skills and behaviors that students learn through no-excuses disciplinary practices. Based on 18 months of fieldwork in one no-excuses school and interviews with 92 students, teachers, and administrators, I argue that students, in many cases, are taught to monitor themselves, hold back their opinions, and defer to authority rather than take initiative, assert themselves, and interact with ease with their teachers… .

Accountability and Urban School Reform

Over the second half of the twentieth century, a wide array of reform efforts were introduced to improve urban education in the United States… . Yet, there is little evidence that these reforms have produced their intended effects (Miron and St. John 2003). Urban schools continue to face problems of high absenteeism, poor-quality instruction, school safety concerns, and low academic achievement.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 established a market-oriented approach to solving educational problems… . Increasingly, schools are implementing market reforms, like performance incentives, high-stakes testing, school choice, teacher evaluations, and the closing and restructuring of failing schools… . Moreover, there is evidence that accountability policies have had a number of unintended consequences that harm low-income minority students, including a concentration on teacher-directed instruction and low-level skills, an attenuated curriculum, marginalization and exclusion of low-performing students, and teaching to bubble students on the cusp of proficiency (Booher-Jennings 2005; Darling-Hammond 2007; Lipman 2003).

Against this backdrop, a group of urban charter schools seems to be defying the odds. In the past decade, no-excuses schools have emerged as a possible solution to closing the achievement gap. There is no official list of no-excuses schools, but the label *no excuses* has been used to describe a group of high-performing urban charter schools, including KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program), Achievement First, Uncommon Schools, Mastery, Democracy Prep, and the Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academies. These schools share several distinguishing features, such as an extended school day and school year, frequent student testing to inform instruction, an intensive process of teacher selection and development, and a highly structured disciplinary system (Dobbie and Fryer 2011b; Thernstrom and Thernstrom 2003; Whitman 2008)… .

In particular, educators are concerned that the behavioral system in no-excuses schools may undermine students' identities, self-confidence, and ability to make decisions (Ellison 2012; Goodman 2013; Lack 2009). Often described as militaristic, no-excuses schools set clear and precise expectations for student behavior, dictating how students dress, enter a classroom, walk up the stairs, show attention in class, organize a binder, and pass in papers (Goodman 2013; Lake et al. 2012; Whitman 2008)… .

Cultural Skills and Inequality

Families transmit economic, human, and social capital to their children as well as a "tool kit" of cultural skills and habits (Swidler 1986). The past two decades have seen a growing recognition of the importance of cultural skills but less clarity on what skills are important, for whom, and in what contexts. In considering the consequences of how new urban schools are socializing students, we must first specify how cultural skills relate to inequality… .

Recent research on cultural capital, redefined as a broad set of skills that helps certain social classes meet institutions' evaluative standards (Lareau and Weininger 2003), finds support for these assertions. Lareau (2003) observes that middle-class parents teach their children to be assertive, take initiative, and negotiate with authority, whereas working-class parents teach their children to hold back their opinions and defer to authority (see also Kohn 1969). As a result, middle-class children are better able than working-class children to customize interactions to their benefit, for example, by gaining additional assistance from teachers (Calarco 2011, 2014; Streib 2011) or by getting a doctor to attend to their concerns (Lareau 2003). "In a historical moment when the dominant society privileges active, informed, assertive clients of health and educational services," Lareau (2002:794) argues, "the strategies employed by children and parents are not equally effective across classes." For Lareau, these interactional skills are symbolic; they are evaluated favorably in a particular time and place… .

Producing Worker-Learners

Schools do more than develop academic knowledge and skills, however; they also transmit habits and skills that shape students for their future roles in society. I argue that, in many cases, the meticulous practices adopted by Dream Academy to ensure academic achievement have the paradoxical effect of producing worker-learners—students who monitor themselves, hold back their opinions, and defer to authority—rather than lifelong learners… .

Not Trusted to Make Decisions

… In particular, seventh and eighth graders complained that school rules make them feel treated like elementary school children. The hallway rules, which stipulate that students must walk with their classes in straight, silent, and forward-facing lines, are among the most detested. To students, these rules signaled that the school did not trust them to make the most basic choices, even as they, as one eighth grader put it, entrusted the school with their education. "I think we would be mature enough to be able to talk to our friends in the hallways," one eighth-grade girl argued. "Like we need to get maturity, too, as we grow older." Her friend concurred: "Our school's real small, so it's like, I want to know where they think we're gonna go—like we're gonna hop down the hallway. Like the classes are really right there."

Inside the classroom, teachers also set precise expectations for student behavior instead of trusting them to monitor themselves. In a typical exchange, Ms. Anderson, a white former Teach for America corps member, and one of the school's most effective teachers, narrated student behaviors one morning to her fifth-grade class:

> "I need everyone to sit correctly in their seats," Ms. Anderson began as she entered the classroom. "Luis. Luis." He sat with his legs turned to the side. "David, I need you to focus and work." Turning to her co-teacher, Ms. Anderson thought aloud, "I'm getting a little nervous that during team time today, we're going to have to have a silent team time." A few minutes later, she changed her strategy from a threat to positive reinforcement. "Let's forget about who's talking and focus on our math drill like so many of our teammates are doing," she encouraged. "A lot of people are doing the right thing." Giving out a verbal warning, and then a detention, Ms. Anderson announced, "Brandon, that's a one, I'm sorry, a two." Gesturing to a girl slouched over, she continued, "Shaniya, sit up, Shaniya, sit up." Catching two students talking, she gave out two more warnings, "Micah, that's a one, stop. Grace, that's a one, stop." (field note)

Like Ms. Anderson demonstrated, teachers were expected to constantly scan their classrooms to ensure students were directing their full attention to the instruction. These frequent reminders helped some students stay focused, but for others, not having a sense of autonomy increased feelings of stress and anxiety (see Ryan and Connell 1989; Ryan and Deci 2000), which can have negative consequences for students' academic performance, motivation, and engagement (Goodenow 1993; Ross and Broh 2000)… .

Experiences of stress and anxiety were not limited to students who were frequently punished. Some of the best-behaved students also felt pressure to watch themselves, because they tried so diligently to be good students.

Opinions Not Needed

… During the school day, students received few opportunities to voice their opinions. To maximize instructional time and keep students focused on their learning, the school stipulates silence during multiple points of the day, including homeroom, transitions between classes, the introductory Do Now exercise, and independent practice. Teaching is largely didactic, with student input solicited primarily in the form of short answers to questions. More advanced teachers integrated interactive activities into their lessons, but new teachers—particularly, those struggling with student behavior—were encouraged to establish order before experimenting with more innovative teaching strategies… .

Especially in the beginning of the year, when teachers were working to establish their authority, students could spend class after class mostly in silence. This led one eighth-grade girl to complain, "We're silent all the time. Silent even in clubs, silent in class, silent. Come out of the building, silent." Even when able to talk, Amir, a diligent fifth grader, learned he should talk only at specific times:

> Self-control is when you're able to talk, when you know to talk at the appropriate time. And it's important because you can get a really bad consequence and I do, I really show self-control because I don't talk at all in class and I talk when the teacher tells me when I have to talk or answer a question. And otherwise I don't talk in class… .

Angie, a former student at Dream Academy, provided students with a glimpse of the interactional skills students would need for college when she came back to speak about her experience as a first-year student at one of the nation's elite boarding schools. During the school's morning assembly, she encouraged students to be open-minded because "they teach a bit differently at her school." She explained that the students at her school "teach each other" by sitting around a table and having discussions… . Although it took her some time to adjust, she liked having the opportunity to use her voice. "I love the method, I grabbed on to it. It makes you realize that your opinion matters." In contrast, at Dream Academy, she had not learned that her opinions matter.

Deferring to Authority

At school, students develop expectations not only for how they should behave but also for how they should relate to authority. At elite boarding schools, students learn to be at ease with adults, which helps prepare them for leadership positions in which they will need to interact with different types of people (Khan 2011). At Dream Academy, students learn different lessons. Given few opportunities to negotiate or participate in rule making, students often find themselves at odds—rather than at ease—with their teachers… .

By demanding that students submit to their authority, teachers tried to enforce schoolwide behavioral norms, but in doing so, they failed to develop in students other important interactional skills. Moreover, by increasing the distance between teachers and students, the school inadvertently made it more difficult for teachers to establish relationships with students, a key factor in classroom management (Marzano 2003). Sydney explained how it was not easy for students to relate to their teachers because they were so strict in class:

> 'Cause some teachers, in class, you're like, you're so strict, I don't want to talk to you… . I like fun people. So like in class, like the teachers always seem like the bad person and the criminal in our mind. It's not that easy to relate to the teachers or wanna talk to them at school. Like some teachers are really cool after school but in class [the students are] like, you're a psycho and I don't want to be near you after school so please do not come to my house, do not tell me to call you, do not do anything.

As Sydney observed, students formed different opinions about their teachers inside and outside of class. Teachers also spoke about how they were able to develop relationships with students outside of school, such as in after-school tutoring and on field trips… .

Implications: Preparing for College

… [W]hile students learned to persist and get through, they may not have developed the interactional skills to set them on the path to lifelong learning.

Ms. Indrigo, the high school's white college counselor, worried that students would not be able to handle the sudden freedoms presented to them in college, because they had not been given the opportunity to make their own choices in high school. "You know, I think partially it's their fault because they haven't learned to manage their freedoms but it's partially our fault because we don't give them any, so when we give them some, they go crazy," she reflected. "And so my biggest fear is that these kids are going to go to college and go crazy and like party all the time and not go to class." …

School leaders recognized that they are not teaching students the skills they will need in college, but they did not see a way to give students greater freedoms without compromising school order and achievement… .

When I asked Ms. Stewart, the black high school principal, how to discipline students without deadening their spirits, she responded, "That phrase –'deaden the spirits'—really, it really hit home to me, because the kids are like, we're in jail; this is prison. They hated it, hated it, hated it." Her vision for the school—a yet unrealized dream—echoed the warm/strict approach embodied by Ms. Wallace:

> I have a vision for rigor; I have a vision for warmth—I want it to be a warm place. I have a vision for high conduct and I have a vision—and this is what doesn't really always mesh well with no excuses —but I have a vision for the gradual release of structure. I want the kids to leave here at the end of 12th grade as young adults, and not as adolescents. And so I'm trying desperately to find the way to maintain our structure, and at the same time enable them to leave as young adults… . And that's the problem that I'm having, I don't know how to do that. Did you expect me to say I have so many "I don't knows"?

Ms. Stewart's desire to prepare her students to leave school as adults, without conceding school structures, points directly to the dilemma that urban educators face in ensuring academic success while also teaching students to be independent. She recognized the problem but lacked a solution… .

Discussion

At present, no-excuses charter schools are one of the most celebrated urban school-reform models because of their success in significantly narrowing the achievement gap for low-income minority students (Dobbie and Fryer 2011a, 2011b). Based on 18 months of fieldwork and interviews with 92 students, teachers, and administrators, I argued that these schools' highly prescriptive disciplinary practices, while arguably contributing to their academic success, have unintended consequences for students. As students learn to monitor themselves, hold back their opinions, and defer to authority, they are not encouraged to develop the proactive skills needed to navigate the more flexible expectations of college and the workplace (Collier and Morgan 2008; Karp and Bork 2014). No-excuses schools thus promote academic achievement while reinforcing inequality in cultural skills. These findings suggest that what works for academic achievement may not coincide with what works for students' success in later life stages… .

For educators in no-excuses schools, I suggest a few alternatives. First, schools can experiment with more-flexible disciplinary practices. At Dream Academy, there was a reluctance to change rules for fear the system would implode. Yet it was not clear whether every rule was necessary for order. Allowing students more choice in their uniform, for example, or making homework rules less rigid might actually foster learning by decreasing students' resistance and perceptions of the unfairness of school rules. No-excuses schools could also put more effort into releasing structures as students progress through school, preparing them for the transition to college. Second, no-excuses schools could dedicate more time to training teachers to be warm/strict. Research on authoritative parenting supports the warm/strict model as an effective parenting style (Baumrind 1966), yet teachers often used overly controlling authoritarian teaching styles. Third, teachers and administrators could structure more opportunities for students to develop initiative, assertiveness, and reasoning skills through student-led activities, chants, debates, group projects, clubs, and advisories as well as through more unstructured time where students and teachers can freely interact… .

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Projects for Further Exploration

1. Use an academic database like JSTOR or Google Scholar to look up *educational reform*. Which reform efforts are most cited in nonacademic journals? How do they compare with the reform efforts discussed in this book?
2. Education reform efforts are changing all of the time. Use the Internet to explore the latest federal reform initiative, whether it is Race to the Top or even newer initiatives. How is this reform effort playing out in your state and/or school district? How are teachers, legislators, and activists within your community responding to the current wave of reforms?
3. Talk to teachers in a local public school. Ask them what kinds of reforms they think would make them more effective in their jobs. Explore what kinds of changes they think they need from both a top-down (federal, state, or district level) and bottom-up perspective (family and community).

Concluding Remarks

Many people hang their hopes on the institution of education and the schools and classrooms within that institution. Ivan Illich, however, is not alone in his frustration with the educational systems in many countries. Other individuals also criticize components of the educational systems, and some offer solutions. Governments wrestle with these problems and look for research that proposes reforms. A number of articles in this book discuss possible reforms (see Chapters 8 and 11 in particular), and yet, they only begin to describe the various reforms that have been attempted or speculate on those that will be tried in the future.

The purpose of this book has not been to propose solutions or reforms, although some of the readings do just that. Instead, we intended to provide readers with an overview of the theories, methods, and issues in sociology of education today. Sociologists provide a rather unique view of institutions, one that places institutions such as education, family, religion, and politics within a societal context. Although few sociologists set out with the goal of school reform, by raising questions about educational issues, they encourage critical analyses of schools. Sociological studies can inform debates and provide scientific findings to guide policymakers. Sociological researchers provide a unique perspective that can help those involved in decisions about our children's education to see schools in a new light.

Why haven't some of the major educational problems been solved? Many of the readings in this book point to reasons why things remain the same or, if changed, why schools still do not meet the needs of many students. We hope that by reading the articles in this book, you have come to understand how complex educational systems are. We hope that you have come to understand that one person's sense of frustration can be another's sense of accomplishment. We hope that you now have a better sense of both the structure and the processes within schools and the many variations and permutations both structure and process have within educational systems. We hope that you now know that schools both mirror and reinforce existing social patterns in society. And we hope you understand that schools do not exist in a vacuum—that educational systems respond to many external conditions, in addition to internal factors, in shaping how we educate young people.

Appendix Web Resources for Continued Exploration of the Topics in This Book

Research Literatures

ERIC can be searched online to find research and reflections on a wide variety of educational topics: http://www.eric.ed.gov/. When at this site, you can search the literature data base.

JSTOR: http://www.jstor.org (found at college and university libraries that subscribe). JSTOR contains electronic versions of journal articles more than 5 years old in such journals as *Sociology of Education*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, and others.

National Library of Education: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/nle

Online Journals and/or Abstracts

Anthropology and Education Quarterly: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1548-1492

Chronicle of Higher Education: http://chronicle.com

Education Week: http://www.edweek.org

Educational Leadership: http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx

Harvard Education Letter: http://hepg.org/hel-home/home (ceased publication in 2015, but passed issues available.)

Harvard Educational Review: http://www.hepg.org/her-home/home

Journal of Blacks in Higher Education: http://www.jbhe.com

Phi Delta Kappan: http://www.pdkintl.org/publications/kappan

Rethinking Schools: http://www.rethinkingschools.org

Teachers College Record: http://www.tcrecord.org

Free Online News Sources

Boston Globe: http://www.bostonglobe.com

LA Times: http://www.latimes.com

New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com

Libraries

Library of Congress: http://www.loc.gov

New York Public Library: http://www.nypl.org

Professional Associations

American Association of School Administrators: http://www.aasa.org

American Educational Research Association: http://www.aera.net

American Federation of Teachers: http://www.aft.org

American Sociological Association (ASA): http://www.asanet.org

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: http://www.ascd.org

Council for Aid to Education: http://www.cae.org

Council of Chief State School Officers: http://www.ccsso.org

Council of Great City Schools: http://www.cgcs.org

Education Commission of the States: http://www.ecs.org

Institute for Educational Leadership: http://www.iel.org

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: http://www.nbpts.org

National Education Association: http://www.nea.org

Sociology of Education Section, ASA: http://www.asanet.org/asa-communities/sections/education

Research Organizations

AACTE Education Policy Clearinghouse: http://aacte.org

Center for Social Organization of Schools: http://www.jhucsos.com

Consortium for Policy Research in Education: http://www.cpre.org

Key National Education Indicators: http://www.nap.edu/catalog/13453/key-national-education-indicators-workshop-summary

National Center for Research in Vocational Education: http://ncrve.berkeley.edu

National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST): http://www.cresst.org

Office of Educational Research and Improvement: http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/TeachersGuide/oeri.html

Office of Postsecondary Education: http://ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/index.html

RAND Organization: http://www.rand.org

U.S. Department of Education: http://www.ed.gov

U.S. Department of Education, National Assessment of Educational Progress. Nation's Report Card: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard

Educational Reform Organizations and Information

ASA Trails: Teaching Resources and Innovations: http://trails.asanet.org

Accelerated Schools Project, Teachers College Columbia University: http://www.tc.columbia.edu/centers/accelerated

Achieve, Inc. (an organization of governors and business leaders): http://www.achieve.org

American Youth Policy Form: http://www.aypf.org

Annenberg Institute on Educational Reform: http://www.annenberginstitute.org

Center for Educational Reform: http://www.edreform.com

Center on Reinventing Public Education: http://www.crpe.org

Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships: http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/military-child-initiative/Library/School-Family-Community_Partnership/Partnership_Index

Coalition for Essential Schools: http://essentialschools.org

Comer School Development Program: http://medicine.yale.edu/childstudy/comer

Edison Learning: http://www.edisonlearning.com

The National Center for Fair & Open Testing: http://www.fairtest.org

National Charter School Research Project: http://www.ewa.org/report/national-charter-school-research-project

Network for Public Education: http://www.networkforpubliceducation.org

Success for All Foundation: http://www.successforall.org

Higher Education Resources

American Association of Community Colleges: http://www.aacc.nche.edu

Association of American Colleges and Universities: http://www.aacu.org

Association for Institutional Research: http://www.airweb.org

Association for the Study of Higher Education: http://www.ashe.ws

Center for International Higher Education (Boston College): http://www.bc.edu/cihe

Community College Research Center: http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education:
http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/fipse/index.html?exp=0

Historically Black Colleges and Universities: http://edonline.com/cq/hbcu

League for Innovation in the Community College: http://www.league.org

Learning Alliance for Higher Education: http://www.thelearningalliance.info

National Center for Postsecondary Improvement: http://ncpi.stanford.edu

National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education: http://www.highereducation.org

Review of Higher Education: http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/review_of_higher_education

Society for College and University Planning: http://www.scup.org

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education: http://www.wiche.edu

International Materials

International Bureau of Education: http://www.ibe.unesco.org

International Sociological Association, RC04 Sociology of Education: http://www.isa-sociology.org

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education

U.S. Government – Comparative Statistics: http://nces.ed.gov

Data

General Social Survey (GSS) is available online, and simple analyses may be conducted online at: http://gss.norc.org

National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES): http://nces.ed.gov

NCES Annual Reports: http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/annualreports

NCES Surveys: http://nces.ed.gov/surveys

Roper Center for Public Opinion Research: http://ropercenter.cornell.edu

School Report Cards: Go to your state education website and search from there

U.S. Census Bureau, Home Page: http://www.census.gov

U.S. Census State, County, and Community Data: http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet

U.S. Census Statistical Abstract of the U.S.: http://www.census.gov/library/publications/time-series/statistical_abstracts.html

The preceding information is an updated list of Internet resources originally compiled by Caroline Hodges Persell and Floyd M. Hammack and originally published in *Teaching Sociology of Education* by the American Sociological Association, 2001.