Sociology of Education

Achievement or Ascription?

- 1. Paradigms

9 Key Reasons EDUCATION?: R Brym (1998)

1. Education is an **objective measure** of class standing in Canada is **education.**

2. Education **helps to sustain our belief** in an achievement oriented society.

3. School is an important part of our lives in a modern **post-industrial society**.

- fragmented, chaotic diverse

4. Post secondary **education is expensive**. Books, tuition, parking, food-most held part-time jobs.

5. **Education is an indicator of success-** Education does impact on social status-not direct correlation.

<u>Education's Link to the Workforce</u>.

6. Sociologists are interested in education's **link to workforce**…

- Mass education means healthy economy and workers.

<u>Social betterment</u>

7. There is a connection between **education and <u>social betterment</u>**.

- Educated people have **<u>less trouble</u>** with the law.
- They are better **<u>able to cope</u>** with recessions,
- Educated people have **<u>fewer alcohol and drug abuse problems.</u>**

Education Provides Employment

- 8. Education is Canada's **largest single industry**
- Teachers, teaching assistant, researchers
- administrators,
- custodial people,
- social workers

Meritocracy

9 . The education system is based on **the ideology of meritocracy**

- The word "**meritocracy**" is now also often used to describe a **type of society** where wealth, position, and social status are in part **assigned** **through competition**

Universalism over parochialism

- **ACHIEVEMENT OVER ASCRIPTION**
- **Meritocracy** = Demonstrated talent and competence, not ascribed status or nepotism.

- People are placed in **positions** of trust, responsibility & social prestige - earned, not inherited or ascribed.

Credentialism

- Is it achieved or ascribed?

Achievement or `ASCRIPTION'?

- Education serves to reinforce class differences.
- A study by Maxwell and Maxwell in Ishwaran (1979) shows how **Upper class children remained** in the **Upper Class** through the private school system.
- (Culture of elites) vs. (Culture of poverty)
- .

Achievement or `ASCRIPTION'?

3. **However,** studies (conflict approach) indicate that **education serves to reinforce class differences**.
4. A study by Maxwell and Maxwell in Ishwaran (1979) shows how **Upper class children remained** in the **Upper Class** through the private school system.
5. (Culture of elites) vs. (Culture of poverty)

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<u>Mobility</u>

1. A **<u>national mobility study</u>** done in 1973 showed that having a low SES predicts 8.1 years of education whereas a high SES predicts 16.1 years**.**
2. **<u>More education</u>** =higher income, higher status.
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Functionalists vs. Marxists on Education

1. Functionalist aspire to the **culture of poverty** argument.

   Oscar Lewis, John Porter, Davis and Moore, Talcot Parsons**….`Blame the victims'**

2. **Marxists** hold that social inequality (education) is ideological and structural. **Blame the system**.

.See <u>Durkheim on Moral Education</u>..

1. ***Education* and Sociology** (1922);

1. Sociology and Philosophy (1924);

1. **<u>Moral Education</u>** (1925)

Marxist Conflict (Illich,1971)

a. See Ivan Illich `**Deschooling'**
b. Educational processes are hegemonic
c. Education is about political economy
d. Education serves the status quo.
e. Open concept classroom vs. back to basics education is ideological.

BARRIERS/HEGEMONY

- **THE `BEST SCHOOLS”**
- 1. produces friendship networks
- 2. promote exclusiveness
- 3. acculturates individuals into the lifestyle

<u>Parents of the Upper class</u>

- **The Upper class is maintained <u>through culture-</u>**see M. Weber `Class, Status, Party' (1926)
- Bowles (1971)-class differences are maintained by the ability of the **upper classes to <u>control school finance</u>**.

Working Class reproduction

- Paul Willis (1988) Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs
- Illustrates how the British school **system reproduces** an underclass.

School as **BUREAUCRACY**- Weberian approach

- **A BUREAUCRACY** HAS THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:

  a. -**Formally constructed** aims and objectives
- b. -Formal rationality and **symbols**
- c. -Hierarchy of **specialized offices**
- d. -**Impersonal** relations

School produces THE IRON CAGE

- **Specialization-**leads to a compartmentalization of knowledge-
- Schools **compartmental places of exchange-**
- I.e. the Math teacher does not deal with the English teacher.

Standardization & Repression

1. **Repression** -individual unique qualities are not encouraged-both students and teachers weed out **non -conformity** and difference
2. **Standardization-**testing

<u>Studies Show that..</u>

1. **IQ Test is <u>misleading</u>**
2. <u>- Knowledge</u> and mental ability are not the same..
3. IQ test **measures ability** to be a better worker, to fit in,
4. **<u>IQ does not measure</u>** questioning, free thinking..

School:Freedom of Thought?

School bureaucracies are inflexible, discourage change

students are **passive recipients** of knowledge.

School is about Formal rationality not substantive rationality.

***HALL-DENNIS ERA*.**

- The ***streaming process*: fact or fiction?**
- *This Magazine HIDDEN PENALTIES OF THE* ***HALL-DENNIS ERA*.** (2002) a critical evaluation.

<u>Education Reform 1995</u>

- The goal of this serious **reform of Ontario education** was "to develop a system that is focused on the students, dedicated to excellence, and accountable to the public it serves“
- **1990s -Mike Harris** introduced **-**Back to Basics, the three R’s.

(**New Foundations for Ontario Education,** 1995)

- This body was responsible for a comprehensive review of the province's educational system- the first review since the **Hall-Dennis Report of 1968**

<u>Paradigms:CONFLICT</u>

- **<u>CONFLICT THEORY</u>**

1. **E**ducation as a **capitalist tool-**
2. Education has a **<u>hidden cirriculum</u>** that
3. Education **<u>encourages social acceptance</u>** and conformity
4. Education serves as an **instrument of bourgeois hegemony**

<u>Streaming</u>

- **In education,** the practice of dividing pupils for all classes according to an estimate of their **<u>overall ability</u>**,
- With arrangements for ‘**<u>promotion’ and ‘demotion’</u>** at the end of each academic year.

Cultural Bias in Intelligence Testing

- It is extremely difficult to develop a test that **measures** of innate intelligence without introducing cultural bias.
- This has been virtually impossible to achieve.

<u>Education is ideological</u>

- **<u>IQ TESTS</u>** in US were used to `**<u>stream’</u>** Black and Hispanic students for decades
- Told their achievements would be limited
- **<u>Racism</u>** is embedded in the education system.

MERITOCRACY is an Illusion

- **Education is supposed** to transcend ascribed statuses of race, sex, or inherited wealth.
- **BUT in Reality- Education** is embedded with:
- 1**. Ascriptive barriers (see conflict theory)**
- **2. Cultural processes (see symbolic interaction)**

Ascriptive Barriers in education

- 1. **Gender -**Women vs Men
- 2**. Race-**Native, Black vs. White
- 3. **Region-**Geography –world
- 4. **Family-**Class background
- 5. **Socialization-**agents

Cultural Processes

1. **Subtle** day to activities
2. Subtle selection and promotion
3. Subtle display of favour and disfavour
4. Subtle ways of ensuring normative conduct.

Conflict Theory:education is ideological

1. **Education is a political construct**
2. **Education** is **linked to the system** and those in power.
3. **Education is Ideological** plays a significant role in determining the goals of education and the results:

<u>Education is about control by elites</u>

- **<u>Deschooling Society-</u>**

1. Ivan Illich (1971) -a **<u>radical Marxist</u>-**went as far as arguing for the deschooling of society.
2. **Illich** maintained that the current economic structure that creates the necessity for **<u>hierarchy of organization and discipline</u>**.

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Education is a capitalistic tool

- **3. Education meets the needs of capitalists-**schools by virtue of their proceedures and organization.
- Education **creates citizenry** that are uncritical of the status quo and a workforce **submissive** to authority.

Ivan Illich (1971)

- **Illich contends** that schools:

  A. teach only **dominant values**

- **B.** provide only **socially approved** knowledge and skills

Historical materialism

- **C.**
- **People in the past** by contrast were considerably more **self-subsistent** in a variety of domains such as entertainment, moral and social values etc.

Credentialism is ideological

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- **D.** He argues that a **de-schooled society would allow people to gain control** over their own lives thereby improving the quality of social life.

A <u>De-schooled society</u>

- <u>E</u>. **His de-schooled society** would include ordinary citizenry rotating with experts in training young people. More flexibility in job assignment.

De-professionalized.

- Education should become **de-institutionalized** and **de-professionalized**
- Currently they have given up their independence to experts who tell us how to think and how to behave through their **credentials.**
- **Professionals** with credentials control society in the interest of elites

The Hidden Curriculum
A Conflict and Interactionist term

Characteristics of Schools:

a. Reproduce class differences
b. Rules
c. behavioural control
d. oppression
e. acceptance

Hidden curriculum

- ***Hidden curriculum,*** can be defined as :
- “the outcomes or by-products of schools or of non-school settings, particularly those states which are **learned but not openly intended.**

Hidden curriculum

- **Found in any setting:**
- traditional,
- recreational
- social activities,
- May **teach unintended lessons; experiences beyond the formal setting**

<u>SI and Conflict</u>

- .A variety of definitions have been developed around the notion of `**<u>hidden curriculum’</u>** based on the **broad range of perspectives** of those who study this phenomenon.

<u>Symbolic Interactionism on Education</u>

1. A **<u>micro</u> sociological evaluation** of school situations
2. **Symbols**, signs and language

- Ie. **Kindergarden as Bootcamp**

Symbolic Interactionism

Ie. The Development of Self Control in the Eastern Cree Lifecycle”

I.e. “Teacher Why Can’t I Be a Hunter? See Ishwaran, **Childhood and Adolescence**

The School As Process

- See Berger and Luckman 1971.

- **The social construction and creation of social reality**:

a. classroom

b. blackboard

c. chalk

d. books

e. pencils

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QUESTIONING Authority?

- **QUESTIONING- only within limits**
- **Not beyond ``the system’**
- **Too much rebellion, leads to discipline**

Kindergarden as Boot Camp:
1977, Harry Gracey

a. The School is a **preparatory system**:
b. The school is the child's first secondary **agent of socialization**
c. In schools, children **grow beyond family and develop** emotionally, physically and academically

Symbols, signs language: of a classroom

- In 1977, Harry Gracey in Introductory Sociology (Wrong and Gracey)
- **BOOTCAMP=**Wilbur Wright Kindergarden

Wilbur Wright School,

- Kindergarten as **induction into `the system' through:**

a. drills
b. routines
c. rigidity
d. regular compliance

1977, Harry Gracey

- Gracey's **observations**:
- **SCHOOL IS:**

1. **Bureaucratic**
2. **Like an assembly-line**
3. **Equivalent to a factory system**
4. **Filled with common signals, and expected responses….**

<u>Education's Function</u>

- **Hidden Curriculum** –the principle goals of public education are **<u>the following:</u>**

a. Universalistic values

b. Standardized curriculum

c. To generate a fair criteria for performance

Prepares Individual to:

a. **Accept** existing ideology

b.Recognize common symbols

c. Generate uniformity of experience

d. To **conform** to societies rules and norms

<u>Summary:</u>
<u>Education and Sociology</u>

1. Education can be a social stable institution maintain the status quo. (**structural functional)**
2. Education is also a reflection of unequal class relations (**conflict)**
3. Education has a hidden curriculum that play out in the **day to day lives** of students (**interactionist)**