

FDN 3800, Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education
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Study Guide
Fall, 2007

1. What is “taxonomy,” in general? What is Bloom’s Taxonomy, in particular? How does it apply to teaching and learning?
2. What is a "learning theory," and specifically, what are "social constructivism," "critical theory," "behaviorism," and "education for social efficiency"?
3. Name four possible ways to think about curriculum. What does each philosophy appear to believe about the purpose of schooling? How do *you* think about curriculum? (Think: Kliebard article.)
4. What is freedom? What are some of the perspectives and insights on freedom which philosophy offers us?
5. How does a teacher determine *normal* student behavior in the classroom, and how does she or he determine the parameters of *acceptable* student behavior? (Consider John Taylor Gatto and Sarah J. McCarthy's positions, in addition to any others which either interest you, or which you believe will be imposed on you by the culture of teaching, or by school policy.)
6. Characterize John Dewey’s philosophy of education.
7. Define the notion of “hidden curriculum.” What are some of its implications for teaching and learning?
8. Jean Anyon, among other scholars, argues that schooling “reproduces” existing social class relationships. What does this mean? What do you believe?
9. What is the difference between education and schooling?
10. What are the most often recognized correlations between the student’s social class background, and educational outcomes?
11. What are “tracking” and “ability grouping,” and what are the differences between them? How do they impact our practice in schools? According to a review of the literature on this common practice (Braddock, et. al, in your reader), what are their *actual* advantages and disadvantages? Be specific.
12. What are some possible implications for children in school of the internalization of negative stereotypes? Consider the internalization of negative stereotypes of African Americans, gays, lesbians, girls and boys.

13. What is “cultural capital”? What does Lisa Delpit mean by “the culture of power”? Is this the same or different than cultural capital? How much access have you had to the culture of power? What, according to Delpit, are some of the most destructive things white middle-class teachers do which have a negative educational impact on children of color, and children from families with a low socio-economic status?

14. What is the historical significance of the Supreme Court decision known as *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*?

15. What does the phrase “institutionalized racism” mean?

16. Explain the notion of “white privilege,” and connect it to the concept of institutionalized racism.

17. We know that “race” is an idea or category that is socially constructed. What is the history of the social construction of the "Negro" in the United States, and what are some of the key ways that it differs from the social construction of the identity of other racial groups in this country?

18. How does Martin Luther King, Jr. use “just law theory” to promote the movement for civil rights? (What is the difference between a just law, and an unjust law?) Apply his argument to the issue of same sex marriage.

19. What are some of the connections between intelligence testing in Europe and in the United States?

20. What was one of Binet’s greatest fears regarding the use of intelligence and aptitude testing?

21. What is Stephen Jay Gould’s central argument regarding the pitfalls of intelligence and aptitude testing?

22. What are the implications for an analysis of tracking if you accept the validity of Stephen Jay Gould’s argument regarding IQ?

23. What is a “gender role”?

24. What social, emotional, and/or educational problems can occur in school as a result of sex-role stereotypes on the part of teachers, students, and society? How can teachers lessen the impact of these problems?

25. What problems are commonly faced by gay, lesbian, or transgendered children and youth in the public schools? How can teachers lessen the impact of these problems?

26. Define “meritocracy”. What role was the SAT intended to play in the creation of a

meritocracy?

27. Nicolas Lemann states that “The SAT and tests like it were put into effect not to fix the problems of American education, but to bypass them.” In your own analysis, and working from Lemann’s essay, is the SAT an appropriate measure of public school educational excellence? Why or why not?

And, Central Questions From the Syllabus

1. What is the purpose of schooling in a democratic society? Is the purpose of education the same or different from the purpose of schooling?
2. What characterizes a just society, and what role, if any, must schools play in the pursuit of justice?
3. Why do we ask students to study only certain areas of knowledge, and not others?
4. What were the high and low points of your own schooling?
5. What characterizes a caring relationship? Should teachers be “caring people” vis-à-vis their students, and should schools try to encourage students to develop into caring people?