

Essay 2: Explaining Educational Inequality

Educ 200 with Jack Dougherty, Fall 2016

Write a memo to the next Hartford Public Schools superintendent to help them think more clearly about the underlying **causes** of educational inequality (not solutions, which comes later).

a) Select and summarize any 4 theories of inequality that we have studied in class, with support from at least one direct quotation from the original text:

- Katie Roy
- Sean Reardon
- Jeannie Oakes
- Pedro Noguera
- Annette Lareau
- Lynn Vogt et. al.
- John Ogbu
- Walter Gilliam et al.
- Claude Steele
- David Sadker and Karen Zittleman

b) For each theory, make an insightful claim that states one of the following:

- The theory applies to your placement school and/or the Hartford region
- The theory does not apply
- More evidence is needed to determine whether or not it applies

c) Support your claim with local evidence, such as:

- Your observations at your Ed 200 school placement
- Your classmates' observations at their Ed 200 placements
- Public data on school resources and educational outcomes (see syllabus)
- Excerpts from the *Puerto Rican Passages* video.
- If you state that more evidence is needed, explain exactly what kind of data, or what kind of study you would design, to determine if the theory applies to your school or Hartford

Your memo will be evaluated on these criteria:

- Does the author accurately and comprehensively summarize each theory?
- Does the author make an insightful argument on whether or not each theory applies?
- Does the author persuasively support these arguments with appropriate evidence?

Maximum length (text plus citations) is 2000 words.

How to cite sources:

Use any academic citation style (such as Chicago-style footnotes or MLA/APA-style in-line citations with bibliography). Copy and paste items below into your footnotes or bibliography.

For observational evidence from an Ed 200 school placement, write something like:

“For example, a Trinity student at Montessori observed. . .” or

“At ELAMS, a Trinity student noticed. . .”

No citation is necessary. You may name the school in this assignment, but use pseudonyms for teachers, students, parents. Avoiding stating “I saw” to help keep this a blind-review exercise.

National and state data:

"Explaining Inequality with SAT vs. NAEP Data Exercise," Trinity College (2016), https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cFkl4xREbowZs2bAQIlewzF5x_QzwhutEdVqdlV5mcM/edit.

District-level resource data:

Jack Dougherty, "Map: Compare US School Districts at the Same Scale, 2014," <http://jackdougherty.github.io/otl-compare-school-districts/index-frame.html>.

Motoko Rich, Amanda Cox, and Matthew Bloch, "Money, Race and Success: How Your School District Compares," The New York Times, April 29, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/04/29/upshot/money-race-and-success-how-your-school-district-compares.html>.

CT School Finance Project, "Spending per student" (2015), <http://ctschoolfinance.org/spending/per-student>.

CT School Finance Project, "Breakdown of spending" (2015), <http://ctschoolfinance.org/spending/spending-breakdown>.

CT School Finance Project, "Mismatched funding and student needs" (2015), <http://ctschoolfinance.org/unfair-system/mismatch>.

School-level resource and outcomes data:

CT Mirror, "Your School" (2015), <http://projects.ctmirror.org/yourschool/index.php>

CT Dept of Education, "[INSERT SCHOOL NAME], School Profile and Performance Reports, 2014-15," <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

To find your school above:

Select District > School > submit, then download PDF

Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) > Montessori Magnet School

Hartford Public Schools > Burns / Env Sci / Exped. Moylan / HMTCA

Hartford context:

Puerto Rican Passages video (Connecticut Public Television, 1995).

Theories:

Katie Roy, "Op-Ed: Connecticut Students Deserve Fair School Funding," *Hartford Courant*, October 6, 2015.

Katie Roy, "Testimony Regard Connecticut's School Finance System, Black and Puerto Rican Caucus Public Hearing," *CT School Finance*, March 9, 2016.

Sean Reardon, "Opinionator: No Rich Child Left Behind," *The New York Times*, April 27, 2013.

Jeannie Oakes, "The Distribution of Knowledge," *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (New Haven: Yale Press, 1985).

Pedro Noguera, *City Schools and the American Dream*. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2003)

Annette Lareau, "Social Class Differences in Family-School Relationships: The Importance of Cultural Capital." *Sociology of Education* 60 (1987): 73-85.

Lynn A. Vogt et.al., "Explaining School Failure, Producing School Success: Two Cases." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 18 (December 1987): 276-286.

John Ogbu, "Immigrant and Involuntary Minorities in Comparative Perspective," in M. Gibson and J. Ogbu, eds., *Minority Status and Schooling*. (NY: Garland, 1991).

Walter S. Gilliam et al., "Do Early Educators' Implicit Biases Regarding Sex and Race Relate to Behavior Expectations and Recommendations of Preschool Expulsions and Suspensions?," *Yale University Child Study Center Policy Brief*, September 2016.

Claude M. Steele, "A Threat in the Air: How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance," reprinted in Eugene Lowe, ed., *Promise and Dilemma: Perspectives on Racial Diversity and Higher Education* (Princeton, 1999).

Claude M. Steele, *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).

David Sadker and Karen R. Zittleman, *Still Failing at Fairness: How Gender Bias Cheats Girls and Boys in School and What We Can Do About It* (New York: Scribner, 2009).