

SOC 205 Week 7 Overview

Introduction

How has COVID-19 changed your experience of education? Learning during the pandemic may have been easier for you. It may have been harder. Students, teachers, and the institution of education itself were challenged around the world as everyone tried to keep learning while they tried to stay healthy.

In this unit, we explore the various functions of the institution of education, from teaching needed skills to thrive in our society, to maintaining social and cultural inequality, to being a tool in a bigger agenda of genocide. We look even deeper at who gets educated, examining the intersections of race, class, gender, ability, and disability in the United State and the world. The inequality we see in the institution of education provides the background of understanding why we need social change.

In the last half of the chapter, we examine the potential for the institution of education to be a driver of social change. We explore the relationship between education, wealth, and income, untangling whether going to school can make you richer and, at a deeper level, whether education can contribute to economic growth in countries. We also look at how our education system has changed over time, including the emerging movements to leverage education as a method for creating transformative social change. We end this chapter where we started, looking at how the global pandemic has provided the impetus to address the digital divide, a social change that impacts many of us, our families, and our communities.

We'll begin to answer these questions together:

1. What is the function of education in our society?
2. How does education serve to reproduce economic inequality?
3. How does social location, including race, gender, and class, impact access to education, educational outcomes and social change?
4. What are some of the current and emerging movements for social change in education, including new applications of Pablo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed?
5. How does the introduction of technology in education provide opportunities to support or reduce social inequality?

Weekly Learning Outcomes (WLO)

After successful completion of this week, you will be able to:

1. Describe how sociology identifies the function of education in society, including Bourdieu's views of the reproduction of economic inequality (CO1, CO3)

2. Examine the role of race, gender, and class in determining access to education and educational outcomes and social change (CO1, CO3)
3. Analyze how social structures and the digital age change education (CO1)
4. Identify current and emerging movements for social change in education, including new applications of Pablo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (CO1, CO3)